

Police-militant clashes in Egypt leave 3 dead

ASSUIT, Egypt (Agencies) — Three people were killed in southern Egypt on Saturday when police clashed with suspected Islamic militants of the Gama'a al Islamiya (Islamic group), security sources said.

They said policeman Ali Sayed Ahmad Saleh and militant Abu al Hamed Ahmad Shehata were killed during the dawn shootout near the Bedari mountains, about 380 kilometres south of Cairo. Student Sayed Abdul Raheem Mostafa also died after he was caught in the crossfire and police are still investigating whether he was a member of the group, the sources said.

Police had been staking out the gunmen believed to be

behind the latest wave of militant violence in Assuit province where 18 people, including two police colonels, were killed over the past 10 days.

Security forces had placed the militants under surveillance since Friday. They arrested 18 group members after the clash, the sources said.

But leading militant Muhammad Abdul Rahman Salama, whose mother was killed in another shootout on Wednesday evening, was still on the run, they added.

The group is fighting to overthrow the government and turn Egypt into a strict Islamic state. It has also targeted foreign tourists and Egyptian Christians.

Gama'a attacks in the province had dwindled considerably since the summer of 1994 when the group shifted its activities north to Minya province. Tough police crackdowns have kept Cairo free of militant violence for almost two years.

Interior Minister Hassan Ali Alfi has said police will step up its fight on all fronts against militants.

"The ministry's current plan is to develop the police offensive everywhere in Egypt to strike at the remaining handfuls of terrorists," Mr. Alfi told the government weekly October in an interview published Saturday.

"We have had positive results in infiltrating fun-

damentalist organisations, in aborting their criminal plans and in arresting their members," Mr. Alfi said.

Militant violence "has been contained in a limited area in south Egypt, especially in Minya province, where individual attacks have taken place against police and civilians after the tightening of the noose around fugitive terrorists," he said.

Mr. Alfi accused unnamed "foreign powers" of "supporting and financing terrorist activities in Egypt."

The foreign and interior ministries have joined in a "plan to dry up the foreign sources of terrorism through cooperation with other countries in extraditing terrorists," he said.



JORDANIAN READS OF THE DEATH OF IRAQI DEFECTORS: A Jordanian man reads a morning newspaper with news of the deaths of General Hussein Kamel and his brother Saddam February 24. Hussein Kamel and Saddam were killed only days after returning home after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein pardoned them, the Iraqi news media reported (Reuters photo)

Three killed, six injured in Kabul rocket strike

KABUL (AFP) — Three civilians were killed and six injured when rockets fired by the Taliban Islamic militia struck the Afghan capital Saturday, hospital staff and witnesses said.

The three died when two Soviet-built BM 21 rockets hit a road alongside a military installation near the centre of the capital, witnesses told AFP.

No independent confirmation was immediately available as to who was responsible for the attack.

The mangled remains of one of the victims, barely recognisable as a human being, was still lying next to a rocket crater about 15 minutes after the volley struck.

"The street was fairly crowded, with civilians going about their routine business, when the Taliban fired the rockets," witness Hamid Magin said.

"Suddenly there was a terrific bang and a huge cloud of dust covered the whole area. When it cleared, I could see the wounded, the dead as well as body parts scattered

along the side of the road," he added.

Doctors at the nearby Wazir Akbar Khan hospital said two of the victims were dead on arrival, while six others had to undergo emergency operations to save their lives.

One of the six victims, all of whom were men, was in a serious condition, they said.

The attack was the third rocket barrage in four days on the city, which enjoyed a month of relative calm during the Holy Month of Ramadan, a period which ended Tuesday.

The fresh wave of attacks comes amid renewed intense fighting on the front lines south of Kabul, which has been besieged by the Taliban for the last five months.

The Taliban militiamen have vowed to topple the four-year-old government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani and impose Islamic law on the whole country.

Kabul has been regularly hit by rocket salvos, which have claimed hundreds of lives over recent months,

since October when the Taliban moved to within seven kilometres of the city's southern suburbs.

The defence ministry has routinely accused the Islamic warriors of carrying out the attacks from their bases on the hills south of here.

Meanwhile, officials in Kabul said the leader of one of Afghanistan's main opposition factions was expected to join forces with the beleaguered Kabul government in the next few days.

Gulhuddin Hekmatyar, head of the Hezb-i-Islami faction which has been battling the government politically and militarily for the past two years, will come to Kabul soon to take up a top post, he said.

"We are expecting a concrete agreement with Hekmatyar imminently," the defence official told AFP.

"The participation of the Hezb-i-Islami in the government will be effective whenever their top officials, including Hekmatyar, arrive in the capital," he added.

Turkish president urges talks with Syria

ANKARA (R) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel on Saturday called on Syria to stop supporting rebel Kurds in Turkey and discuss a long-running dispute over the River Euphrates.

"Syria must give up using terror as an instrument of foreign policy and seek a solution to its problems with Turkey in a way fitting to good neighbourly and brotherly ties," Mr. Demirel said in a message to Gulf states and Egypt explaining Turkey's position.

Mr. Demirel also said Syria had so far not agreed to Turkey's repeated calls for dialogue on the issue of sharing water from the Euphrates.

Mr. Demirel said he believed Syria's recent moves to pull the Arah World to its side over the water sharing dispute stemmed from "a need to hide the great responsibility it took upon itself with its support of terror."

Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) whose 11-year fight for control of southeast Turkey has claimed more than 18,500 lives — is believed based in Syria or the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley in Lebanon.

Mr. Demirel said he hoped Arab countries would not be party to Syria's groundless attacks on Turkey.

Rival Arab neighbours Syria and Iraq reached rare agreement in talks last week to launch an international campaign to force Turkey to accept "fair and reasonable sharing" of the Euphrates, which flows to Syria and Iraq from Turkey.

They urged banks and firms to stop financing the building of projects on the Euphrates.

Damascus has formally asked the Arab League to discuss the dispute.

Their protests have grown since November when Ankara announced a finance agreement for a fourth dam on the Euphrates, designed to produce power and irrigation water for southeastern Turkey.

'Iraqi defector expressed doubt before returning home'

By Randa Habib
Agence France Presse

AMMAN — Iraqi defector General Hussein Kamel spent his final days in exile in Jordan trying to reassure himself and his family that they would be safe to return to Baghdad, people close to him said Saturday.

General Kamel informing his wife Raghad of what proved to be a suicidal decision to go back, told her: "Don't be frightened, I'm sure nothing will happen to you."

"As for my brother and myself, I hope everything will go well," he said shortly before the family left Jordan for Iraq on Tuesday with the blessing of President Saddam Hussein.

But the general, a son-in-law and former close aide of President Saddam, was well aware of the enormous risks he and his brother Colonel Saddam Hassan were running despite their apparent pardon from Baghdad.

Three days after their return, the pair — along with another brother, Hakim, and

their father — were murdered at their home in Baghdad by their own relatives, the Iraqi authorities announced.

The United States and exiled Iraqi opposition groups said they had no doubt President Saddam ordered their execution to avenge their betrayal.

The two brothers and their wives Raghad and Rana, both daughters of President Saddam, fled to Jordan on Aug. 8. Four days later Hussein Kamel called for President Saddam's overthrow.

However, after failing to rally the Iraqi opposition, Gen. Kamel began to make positive comments about Iraq, saying the internal situation had improved and welcoming the organisation of legislative elections.

Asked whether this meant he was ready to return to Baghdad, the general told AFP six days ago: "Why not? It could happen sooner or later, depending on the circumstances."

Two days later he explained that these "circumstances" concerned negotia-

tions he had begun with the Iraqi authorities to organise his return.

Gen. Kamel admitted his overtures to the Iraqi government — including a denial of press reports the President Saddam had cancer — were designed to prove his "good intentions."

The day before his departure he said he had "no quarrel with the Iraqi president" and had sent a written message to President Saddam asking for permission to "return without conditions."

The message was passed on by an Iraqi businessman and friend of the family who travelled between Amman and Baghdad acting as a go-between.

General Kamel, who knew the Iraqi government inside out as a former industry and defence minister and advisor to President Saddam, said he was "ready to face a court, answer its questions and submit to a possible punishment" for treason.

Nevertheless, two hours before his departure on Tuesday Gen. Kamel had lost some of his confidence. He

sounded "tense and nervous" during a telephone interview, an AFP reporter said.

But he chose to believe in the security guarantees given to him and his family by Baghdad via the Iraqi ambassador to Jordan, Nuri al-Wayes.

The ambassador visited Gen. Kamel on Tuesday at an Amman guest palace to give him a statement from the Iraqi highest body, the Revolutionary Command Council, apparently pardoning the two defectors.

Mr. Wayes then accompanied the general and his family to the Iraqi border post of Trebil, where they were met by President Saddam's eldest son Uday, regarded as one of the toughest figures in his father's regime.

Immediately the two wives were separated from Hussein Kamel and his brother Saddam, in a chilling foretaste of what was to come.

Iraq's Youth Television, run by Uday, announced that the wives had divorced the defectors several hours before it reported the killings on Friday.

New law bans adoption, but not female circumcision in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — The adoption of children is to be banned but not the circumcision of girls by a new law to be passed by Egypt's parliament next week, the press said on Saturday.

The draft law for the rights of children "forbids the adoption of children in conformity with Islamic law," the government daily Al-Ahram said.

Previously, Egyptian civil registrars would not grant adoption requests, but the new law puts the interdiction officially on the books.

Islamic Sharia law bans adoption to prevent the confusion of bloodlines.

A clause which outlawed the circumcision of girls was also in earlier drafts of the law, but was removed after fierce debate, the weekly Akhbar Al-Yom said.

The ban on excision was dropped despite testimony by the Mufti of Egypt, the country's highest religious authority, in a letter to parliament that "Islamic law does not

require" the practice, the paper said.

Female circumcision became the topic of a highly sensitive debate in September 1994 after the American television station CNN ran footage of an Egyptian girl undergoing excision.

The practice involves the cutting away of part or all of the clitoris and is usually performed at the advent of puberty.

The Sheikh of Al-Azhar, Gad al-Haq al-Gad al-Haq, Egypt's other top Islamic authority, opposed the mufti on the issue in an October 1994 fatwa (religious decree), calling excision "a duty for men as well as women."

"If a person abstains from it, the imam (cleric) should urge them to do it, just as if the person were ignoring the call to prayer," Sheikh Gad al-Haq said in the opinion.

After the fatwa, the health minister backed off a considered ban on excision, saying he could not stamp out a "custom practiced for hun-

dreds of years by 98 per cent of families in rural areas and 70 per cent of the urban population."

The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights (EOHR) began suing Sheikh Gad al-Haq in April, claiming around \$150,000 "for damages caused by the fatwa." A court is to continue hearing the case on June 11.

"The government's hesitation in banning circumcision shows that it has no problem with the spread of extremist ideas as long as they don't threaten its own power," EOHR Secretary General Nigad Al-Borai told AFP.

"The government fights against armed Islamists in south Egypt, but encourages Al-Azhar to propagate ideas even more extreme than the militants," he said.

The new law on children also requires couple to have medical examinations before marriage and lays a penalty of three months prison for those who fail to do so.

Cairo book fair opens as intellectuals complain of pressure

CAIRO (AP) — Prime Minister Kamal al-Ganzouri opened the Cairo International Book Fair on Saturday as leading intellectuals complained they face not only death threats from Muslim militants but also government attempts to squelch free speech.

On the government side, Information Minister Safwat al-Sherif said he saw the annual — the largest in the Arab World — as a response to Islamic radicals trying to impose their strict view of religion on the whole society.

Beside 2,400 publishers from 76 countries displaying their books, the Cairo book fair has become known for its seminars which give the pub-

lic a rare chance to question government officials and prominent writer.

This year's seminar theme is "Egypt and the World," meant to look at Egypt's role in the new world order and at the question of whether Egyptians see themselves as Muslims, Arabs or descendants of the ancient Pharaohs.

Mahmoud Amin al-Alem, a leftist intellectual, praised the 10 days of seminars as a chance for intellectuals to speak out but said the government should encourage such discussions year round.

"We want to have access to the media to discuss our ideas for the future as opposed to extremists who want to pull

us to the past and issue death threats against anyone who opposes them," Mr. Alem told the Associated Press.

He also criticised the government for "compromising with political Islamic groups as they share the same background. The two are using religion for political means: The state, to emphasise its grip over power and the extremists to reach power."

Mustafa Bakri, editor-in-chief of the opposition daily Al-Ahram, complained that the government, while seeking intellectuals' support to fight the militants, was restricting freedom of speech and the press.

Mr. Bakri referred to a press law adopted last May,

increasing the penalty for libel or insulting government officials from a maximum six months imprisonment to a minimum of two years.

Mr. Bakri said he alone faced nearly 30 cases of libel and slander, many encouraged by the new law. "If I were sentenced in all these cases, I would remain in jail for the rest of my life," he said.

However, the head of the state information service, Nabil Osman, said a committee named to draft a new press law in response to journalists' protests would soon complete its work. It was supposed to have drafted the law by last October.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 The Flintstones
14:30 Disney's Aladdin
15:00 Family Playhouse
15:30 Puppets Summer
15:50 Islamic History in Jordan
16:10 Drama - Okavango
17:00 Doc. - Des Plantes Et Des Hommes
17:30 Serie - Les Compagnons De L'Aventure
18:00 Magazine - Envoies Speciaux
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine - Sports Et Musique
19:30 News Headlines
20:00 Doc. - Oriental Rugs
20:30 Hawaii Five-0 (drama)
21:25 Doc. - Women of the World
22:30 News in English
23:25 Counterstrike
23:35 The American Chart Show
23:59 Series - Stay Lucky

PRAYER TIMES

04:49 Fajr
06:06 Sunrise (Sunni) Duha
11:49 Dhuhr
15:02 Asr
17:32 Maghrib
18:49 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedeh, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel.
63785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624941
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637441
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622365
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman
Tel. 811295
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261
St. Egidius Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel.
652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
624324
German-speaking Evangelical Con-
gregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman
Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Scattered showers are expected in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom with winds south-westerly active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds south-
only active, and seas rough.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 671111
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 696391
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 625201
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 810291
Central Amman Telephone
Exchange 623111
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661111
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 681111
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power
Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 16-53281
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 16-53281

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT
This information is supplied by

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights (Terminal 1)
06:30 Bangkok (RJ)
06:35 Dhahran, Aqaba (RJ)
06:55 Jeddah (RJ)
07:25 Larnaca (RJ)
07:30 Riyadh (RJ)
07:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
07:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
08:05 Beirut (RJ)
08:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
08:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
07:45 Brunei, Paris (RJ)
07:45 London (RJ)
08:25 Athens (RJ)
08:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
08:50 Tunis (add) (RJ)
09:20 Rome (RJ)
09:50 Vienna, Munich (RJ)
09:10 Cairo (RJ)
09:10 Istanbul (TK)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
10:30 Samaa (YI)
12:40 Sharjah, Bahrain (GF)
14:00 Doha (OT)
14:30 Muscat (SU)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:20 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights (Terminal 1)
04:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
06:15 Beirut (RJ)
06:50 Frankfurt (RJ)
07:30 Munich, Vienna (RJ)
07:30 Larnaca (RJ)
07:30 New Delhi (RJ)
07:30 Jeddah (RJ)
07:55 Athens (RJ)
08:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
08:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
07:45 Brunei, Paris (RJ)
07:45 London (RJ)
08:25 Athens (RJ)
08:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
08:50 Tunis (add) (RJ)
09:20 Rome (RJ)
09:50 Vienna, Munich (RJ)
09:10 Cairo (RJ)
09:10 Istanbul (TK)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
10:30 Samaa (YI)
12:40 Sharjah, Bahrain (GF)
14:00 Doha (OT)
14:30 Muscat (SU)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:20 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fits per kg.
Apple 700/500
Banana 500/300
Banana (Mukammal) 520/320
Banana (imported) 820/650
Carrot 60/40
Cauliflower 170/100
Cucumbers (large) 180/100
Cucumbers (small) 200/100
Eggplant 200/150
Garlic 1000/800
Grape Fruit 120/120
Lemon 400/250
Marrow (large) 150/100
Marrow (small) 200/120
Onion (green) 140/100
Onion (dry) 210/150
Orange 480/300
Pepper (hot) 500/400
Pepper (sweet) 540/400
Potato 220/150
Radish 140/100
Siling Beans 700/500
Spinach 160/100
Tomato 150/80

Travellers to West Bank stranded at King Hussein Bridge crossing

JERICHO, WEST BANK (AFP) — Several hundred travellers from Jordan to the West Bank were blocked at the King Hussein Bridge crossing point on Saturday after President Yasser Arafat ordered it closed, officials said.

Several Palestinians who tried to sneak into the West Bank through nearby fields were dragged back to their buses by policemen, he said.

Mr. Arafat ordered the bridge linking the West Bank with Jordan closed to Palestinians for the first time on Friday to protest harassment by Israeli authorities.

The decision to block access to the bridge was taken by President Arafat after Israeli arrested and turned back Palestinians on the bridge in violation of the (autonomy) accords.

Mr. Arafat said, "Everyone has to conform to these measures," he said, adding that travellers also were banned from travelling in the other direction to Jordan.

All Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip wanting to enter Jordan have to cross a terminal in Jericho where they are checked by Palestinian police before subsequently passing through Israeli and Jordanian controls.

The King Hussein Bridge is mostly used by Palestinians and foreign tourists to cross into Jordan, as Israelis enter the Kingdom via a crossing point in the north of the Jordan Valley.

Under the terms of the autonomy accords between Israel and the Palestinians, the Jewish state maintains control of border security in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Jordanians see Hussein Kamel's murder as inevitable

By Ghalia Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The killing of General Hussein Kamel and his family members in Baghdad on Friday came as no surprise to many Jordanians with most of them agreeing that it was inevitable that the general's return would lead to his death.

"What did he expect? Didn't he know he would get killed?" said Maher H., a 45-year old businessman, adding that the mystery about the General's defection on Aug. 8 and his return to Baghdad last Tuesday will remain unsolved.

"He who defects from his country should never go back," he said. The Iraqi government announced on Friday that Gen. Kamel, his brothers colonel Saddam and Hakim and their father were killed by members of their clan three days after first two returned with their wives to Iraq from Jordan.

The defectors' decision to return to their country came after President Saddam pledged to pardon them. Lawyer Omar Jazy, 26, told the Jordan Times that he had expected Gen. Kamel would be killed but not so soon after his return.

"The killings of the two defectors shortly after they were pardoned by the Iraqi president were inexplicable just as they were unexpected," he added.

Mr. Jazy said Gen. Kamel was perceived by the Iraqi government as a traitor when he defected to Jordan in August under the pretext of wanting to overthrow the Iraqi regime. He gained nothing from his move which cost him his life, Mr. Jazy added.

"He revealed information about his country then returned to the dustbin of history," Mr. Jazy said. "The killings served him right. If he had stayed with the opposition then he would have proved that he was a man of principle," Mr. Jazy added.

Some believed the general's defection to Jordan then his murder after he was granted clemency was a "farce" planned by President Saddam. A few even expressed suspicion that Gen. Kamel could still be alive.

"The general might not have been actually killed. It could be a conspiracy or a scenario," Jameel, a 28-year-old diesel distributor, said.

But, if what has been reported is true, he added, the killings could have been easily predicted. An intrigue most likely exists behind the scenes, he said.

Others said that Gen. Kamel has always been part of the Iraqi regime and a close aide of the Iraqi President.

"He is no different from Saddam," said Tahseen Issa, a cashier. A 22-year-old employee at an advertising agency expected that there would be no change in Iraq as long as Saddam remained president.

"How could a change take place in Iraq when a father cannot trust his son with his personal opinion in the fear that he could be working for the regime?" she asked.

As for Gen. Kamel, she added, the president deceived him by approving his return to Baghdad.

10,000 visitors tour Petra over Eid - official

AQABA (Petra) — Nearly 10,000 people visited Petra over the Eid al Fitr holiday last week.

According to Director of the Petra Antiquities Department Suleiman Farajat, 7,050 foreign nationals and 2,750 Jordanians visited the ancient city.

Mr. Farajat Saturday said hotels in Petra and Wadi Musa had reported an 80 per cent occupancy rate during the holiday.

Meanwhile Mahmoud Hilalat, director of the Tourism Department in Aqaba reported that 5,900 visitors to Jordan passed through the Wadi Araba crossing point north of Aqaba during the holiday.

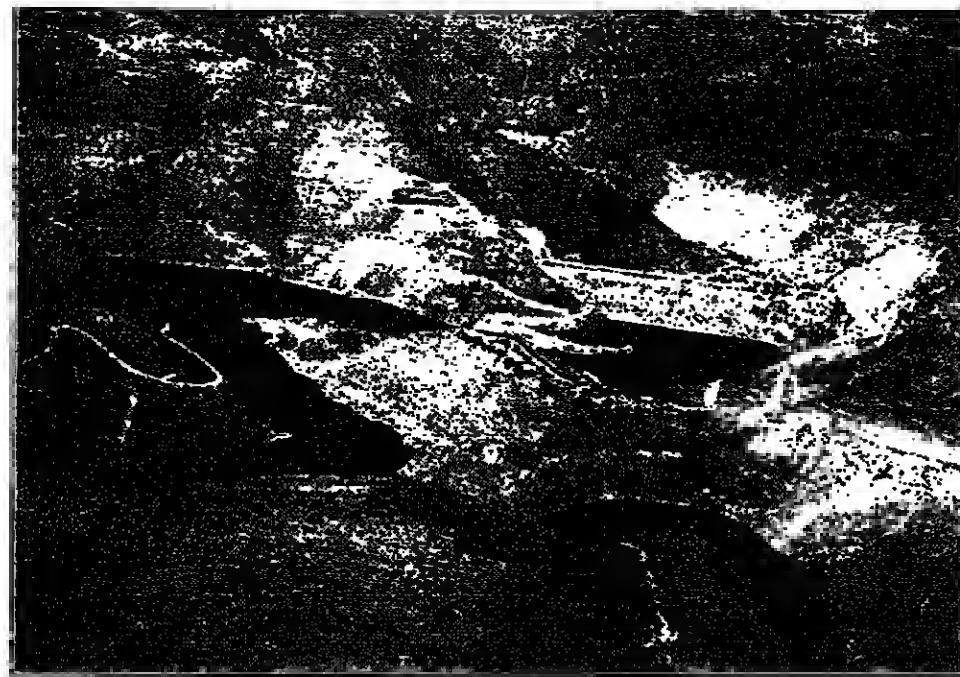
Mr. Hilalat said that the foreign visitors toured Petra, Wadi Rum and other places of interest.

According to Mr. Hilalat, Aqaba's 36 hotels, with a total of 3,400 beds, were 100 per cent occupied mainly by Jordanian vacationers.

Minister announces foreign service appointments

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Khaled Madadiah Saturday announced transfers and new appointments of foreign service personnel effective March 1.

According to the announcement Minister Plenipotentiary in Beijing Fuad Atiyeh will be transferred to the Kingdom's embassy in Santiago, Chile; Counsellor Azzam Daoud will be transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to London; First Secretary Mahmoud Arses and First Secretary Ayed Dararjeb from the ministry to Damascus; First Secretary Ayman Amin from Washington to the Jordanian mission at the United Nations in New York; Second Secretary Mobammad Nueimat from the ministry to Rabat; Second Secretary Sausan Abu Awad from the ministry to Beijing; Second Secretary Iman Khreis from the ministry to New Delhi; Third Secretary Ahmad Adris from Yemen to Tehran; Hassan Sarareb from the ministry to Muscat; Attache Fanar Dabbas from the ministry to the U.N. delegation in Geneva; Ahmed Sweidan from the ministry to Tehran; Attache Samer Naber from the ministry to the Jordanian mission at the U.N. in New York; Attache Khaled Shawabkeh from the ministry to Bonn; Lina Hadid from the ministry to Vienna; Attache Samer Dabbas from the ministry to Abu Dhabi; Attache Maber Tarawneh from the ministry to Jakarta; Attache Shaker Emoush from the ministry to Islamabad; Attache Salah Suheimar from the ministry to Kingdom's mission to the U.N. in New York; and Mobammad Tell from the ministry to Tel Aviv.



The King Talal Dam (file photo)

to utilising privately owned artesian wells to supply water to citizens. But, he added that ownership rights will be safeguarded. He said the ministry would

also use water tankers to ensure fair distribution and thus will need to have the appropriate number of water trucks ready in each governorate.

Mr. Kavar said that the ministry is also keen to ensure sufficient and fair distribution of water to Jordan Valley farmlands, the main supplier of summer

NEWS IN BRIEF

King visits army headquarters

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein, the supreme commander of the Jordanian Armed Forces, Saturday called at the army headquarters and met with Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Abdul Karim Kabariti, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Abdul Hafez Kaabneh and his assistants. Discussion covered issues of concern to the Jordanian armed forces. Also present at the meeting were Chief of the Royal Court Awn Khasawneh, the King's advisor on national security affairs Mustafa Qaisi and Hamdy Al Fayez, the King's advisor on military affairs.

Kabariti, Ensour review higher education needs

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Saturday visited the Ministry of Higher Education and met with Minister Abdullah Ensour and senior assistants to discuss several issues of concern to higher education in Jordan.

Public finance sector asked to submit development ideas

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Finance Marwan Awad Saturday chaired a meeting in his office attended by heads of various ministry departments as well as directors of the Income Tax Department, the Lands and Survey Department, the Customs Department, the Free Zones Corporation, the Amman Financial Market and the Budget Department. Mr. Awad urged the officials to submit ideas for developing and modernising the work of their respective departments, saying that the government was aiming at cutting down on routine and bureaucracy.

New PSD team heads for Slovenia

AMMAN (Petra) — A new group of police officers from the Public Security Department (PSD) left Saturday for Slovenia to serve in the United Nations peace keeping force. They were seen off by Major General Najib Bataineh, assistant PSD director, and other senior officers.

Chilean film week to start Monday

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Chilean embassy in Amman Saturday said it would host a Chilean film week in Jordan starting Monday. The films, which will be shown at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at Jabal Amman, include three famous movies which depict wars in Central America, historic events and adventure.

Jordan to participate in UNCTAD meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan is to take part in preliminary meetings organised by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to open in Geneva Monday. Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Mobammad Smadi will represent the Kingdom at the meeting which is being convened to prepare for an UNCTAD conference in South Africa in April.

CDD responds to 346 emergencies

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Defence Department (CDD) Saturday announced that its various departments dealt with 346 emergencies which included 24 fires during the Eid al Fitr holiday last week. Head of the CDD's Public Relations Department Farid Share said the emergencies resulted in 13 deaths, mainly caused by road accidents and food poisonings.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* "Brigitte Bardot en Chanson," at the French Cultural Centre, at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Abstract (plastic) art by Mirvat Ernie Wahhab at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery (until March 5).

* Paintings by Jordanian and other Arab artists at Alia Art Gallery (until March 5).

* Engravings by French artists at the French Cultural Centre (until Feb. 29).

Jordan condemns killing of Kamel

(Continued from page 1)

(Hussein Kamel) with safety and security. But, unfortunately, he chose to go where there is neither dignity for humans nor freedom for citizens," said the prime minister. "The killings were very much within the norm of things that usually happen in Iraq."

The prime minister rejected Iraqi reports that His Majesty King Hussein had prevented President Saddam's daughters from returning to Iraq.

"His Majesty has been very clear that if Hussein Kamel chooses to go anywhere (other than Iraq) his wife (and her sister) would have to stay in Jordan receiving the hospitality of His Majesty," Mr. Kabariti told reporters before receiving the Iraqi ambassador in Amman Nouri Elweyyes at the prime ministry.

A government official had told the Jordan Times that the King informed Gen. Kamel of this decision when the Iraqi defector requested to go to Syria over two weeks ago.

Minister of Information Marwan Muasher told the Jordan Times the prime minister, who is also foreign minister, summoned the Iraqi ambassador to demand explanation for statements made in Iraq by President Saddam's daughters that the King prevented them from going back to Iraq and for the circumstances of the killings of Gen. Kamel and his brothers and father.

Dr. Muasher said Jordan "did not at any point in time prevent the Iraqi president's daughters from returning to Iraq." Saying that the Iraqi ambassador offered nothing new about the killings of the Iraqi defectors, Dr. Muasher said Jordan rejects the way in which the defectors were treated.

"We would have hoped that they had at least received a fair trial," Dr. Muasher said.

Gen. Kamel, the former Iraqi minister of industries, called for the toppling of the Iraqi regime four days after he defected to Jordan on Aug. 8.

Officials then said that King Hussein made sure that

bands or children — even though they are the Iraqi leader's grandchildren.

"For Saddam Hussein, these are the children of traitors, and as such he did not want them to return to Iraq," a friend said.

But Raghad and Rana refused to leave their children behind, and the government upped what General Kamel called "dialogue" with the family to negotiate their return.

In Baghdad, two assassins who died as they murdered the defectors were buried as "martyrs" on Saturday in a state funeral attended by senior officials, the state-run news agency INA said.

Two open cars carried the coffins, draped by Iraqi flags, of the "martyred heroes" Thayer Abdul Kader Suleiman Al Mujid and Ahmad Abdul Ghatur Al Majid in a procession to their and Presi-

dent Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit.

The pair died Friday when they attacked the home of their relatives, Gen. Kamel and Col. Saddam.

INA said the two members of the clan "fell during an attack carried out by several youths to cut the traitors' throats."

The funeral at Tikrit, 200 kilometres north of Baghdad, was attended by Izzat Ibrahim al-Dulaimi, the vice chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), other RCC members, cabinet ministers and Baath Party officials.

Correspondents with foreign news organisations were not allowed to attend.

The government daily Al Jumhuriyah said a Muslim memorial service would be held for the "martyrs" in the evening.

Gen. Kamel's killing provokes international condemnation

Continued from page 12

Tehran Radio said. The killings would increase the resolve of Iraqi opposition groups to fight the Baghdad government by convincing them that it could in no way be trusted, the radio added.

The speaker of Kuwait's parliament, Ahmad Al

Saadun, said: "This assassination is not surprising from a bloody regime notorious for routinely liquidating its members."

"Rejected by the Iraqi opposition, disowned by countries in the region which he hoped would provide support to provoke a change in Iraq, and having become a heavy burden for the Jordanian government, Gen.

Kamel Hassan threw himself into the lion's den," Mr. Saadun said.

"The assassination of the criminal Hassan should reinforce international community's firmness toward the Baghdad regime, which has proven its unlimited and its lack of credibility," he said.

Friends of the two defectors voiced concern at the fate of the defectors' children.

The whereabouts of the children was unknown on Saturday after the two defectors were murdered at their Baghdad home. The wives, Raghad and Rana, divorced the pair on Thursday.

Members of the general's circle said the Iraqi government had initially agreed to the return only of Saddam's daughters without their hus-

Sinn Fein says Northern Ireland 'screams' for peace

DUBLIN (R) — Sinn Fein told Britain Saturday that Northern Ireland was "screaming out" for peace talks as London police dismantled a bomb factory assembled by its IRA guerrilla supporters to pressure the British government.

"Quite clearly what we need on this island, what people are screaming out for, is peace negotiations now, not in three months' time," Martin McGuinness, a Sinn Fein strategist said.

Mr. McGuinness said he was prepared to ask the clandestine IRA to end the bombing campaign they resumed two weeks ago after a 17-month ceasefire but could only do so if he had assurances that Britain was prepared to convene all-party talks.

He urged British Prime Minister John Major to make a "statement that they (Britain) are going to be part of a process of meaningful negotiations about the future of this island".

McGuinness was speaking on BBC Radio as British police examined detonators and wiring found in a London house used by IRA bomber Edward O'Brien, who blew himself up on a London bus last week on his way for an attack on an unknown target.

It was the second find in the South London house but did not include any more of the Czech-made Semtex plastic explosive favoured by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and used in a blast at London's Canary Wharf on Feb. 9.

That attack signalled an end to the IRA's 17-month ceasefire and a resumption of a war aimed at ending British rule of Northern Ireland and the start of intensified Anglo-Irish efforts to salvage a deadlocked peace process.

In London, plans are being drawn up to extend security measures round London's financial district — thought to be one of the IRA's main targets — to include checkpoints extending as far as St. Paul's Cathedral and the Old Bailey Law Courts.

Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring said in a keynote speech in southern Ireland Friday night that the situation required urgent treatment by the London government.

Officials from both governments were working through the weekend to devise a package aimed at persuading the IRA to restore its ceasefire and to convene some form of all-party talks to give negotiations a chance.

"We are willing to sit down with the British government

for as long as it takes to address each of the issues. But we say again: It must happen soon."

Mr. Spring, an architect of the original 1993 Anglo-Irish peace plan blown to bits by the IRA, warned that the peace effort was in "grave peril" unless urgent steps were taken.

Irish officials fear that the peace process may take second place on the agenda of Britain's Conservative government, which is looking weaker daily after a string of defections and internal strife.

"It's understandable that John Major may have his mind elsewhere," said one senior Irish official. "When he wakes up Monday he must worry how he will survive until Friday."

The defection this week of Peter Thurnham on the eve of a key vote Monday on Britain's arms policy towards Iraq in the 1980s has whittled Mr. Major's majority to two.

Dublin's Irish Times joined the chorus of calls for urgent action towards all-party talks in a rare front-page editorial. "The reality is that if the democratically elected politicians cannot define a pathway forward, the IRA will define its own," it said Saturday, the day before island-wide demonstrations by ordinary people clamouring for peace.

"This will be blood-drenched, and the IRA will be joined upon it by their loyalist counterparts," it said.

Britain Saturday expressed hope that the Northern Ireland peace process could be salvaged despite the resumption of the IRA bombing campaign.

Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew said British government officials and the IRA's political wing Sinn Fein had kept in contact since the bomb blasts in London this month.

"Yes, (the peace process) can be salvaged. I can't be sure but I believe it can (be salvaged)," Sir Patrick said in an interview broadcast on the Dardline programme on Australia's state-owned SBS Television Network.

Sir Patrick said talks were being held between the Irish and British governments and the parties in the peace process to pave the way for substantial negotiations on the future of the British-ruled province.

"We are keeping a link open between (British government) officials and Sinn Fein," he said.

But he said British government ministers were not involved in talks with "People who at the same time support the bombing".

FBI arrests ex-NSA employee for spying for Soviet Union

WASHINGTON (R) — The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) said it arrested a former employee of the super-secret National Security Agency (NSA) Friday on charges of conspiring to spy for the Soviet Union for 10 years starting in 1964.

It said Robert Lipka, 50, who distributed top-secret national defence documents while working at the NSA's headquarters from 1964 to 1967, was taken into custody without incident at his home in Millersville, Pennsylvania.

The NSA, part of the U.S. Defence Department and based in Fort Meade, Maryland, conducts electronic surveillance of communications worldwide. Mr. Lipka had been in the U.S. army while assigned to the NSA.

FBI officials alleged that Mr. Lipka took secret documents with him when he left the NSA in 1967 and that the spying continued until a meeting he had with Soviet representatives in 1974.

The FBI disclosed that a cooperating witness who has been granted immunity said Mr. Lipka admitted in the mid-1960s that he had been spying for the Soviets. Mr. Lipka used the name "Ivan" to refer to his Russian contact, the witness told the FBI.

Justice Department officials said they believed Mr. Lipka was the unidentified NSA spy mentioned in the biography of former KGB chief Oleg Kalugin, The First Directorate: My 32 Years in Intelligence And Espionage Against The West.

Mr. Lipka, a heavyset man with black hair and glasses, appeared in court at a pre-arrestment hearing. He shook his head during the reading of the charge against him and said, "I'm really in a quandary over what to do."

He asked to speak directly to the head of the NSA and said he needed to see a doctor because he had the flu.

A preliminary hearing was set for Wednesday.

In his book Mr. Kalugin described a young soldier at the NSA in the mid-1960s who voluntarily came to the Soviets and "passed on reams of top-secret material." The soldier was said to be involved in shredding and destroying NSA documents.

"He handed us the NSA's daily and weekly top-secret reports to the White House, copies of communications on U.S. troop movements around the world, and communications among the NATO allies," Mr. Kalugin wrote.

"He gave us whatever he got his hands on, often having little idea what he was turning over," Mr. Kalugin said, adding that the soldier eventually left the NSA and used the KGB's money to pay for his college education.

Mr. Kalugin, who said he personally translated the information to be sent back to Moscow, added that he never met the spy and he did not identify Mr. Lipka by name.

Justice Department officials said the case was not as significant as the Aldrich Ames scandal. Mr. Ames, a former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) official, was convicted of passing some of most closely guarded U.S. secrets to Moscow in one of the most damaging spy cases in the nation's history. He is serving a life sentence in prison.

U.S. attorney Michael Stiles told a Philadelphia news conference he did not expect to seek the death penalty in Mr. Lipka's case.

According to the arrest warrant issued in Pennsylvania, an FBI undercover agent in 1993 posed as a Russian military intelligence officer and contacted Mr. Lipka using the code word "took" which had been learned from earlier investigations.

Mr. Lipka told the agent the Soviets did not pay him enough money for his earlier efforts, according to the arrest warrant, which said Mr. Lipka received between \$500 and \$1,000 every four to six weeks from 1967 to 1969.

Mr. Lipka also told the FBI agent he had replaced an NSA employee who had spied for the Soviets and who had committed suicide when he learned he was under suspicion.

According to Mr. Lipka, a colonel at the NSA told him that if he turned out like his predecessor, the colonel personally would shoot him. Mr. Lipka then told the FBI agent, "there's a certain irony in everything, isn't there?"

Hong Kong government under fire over high death toll in cold spell

HONG KONG (AFP) — The Hong Kong government faced intense criticism Saturday over the large number of elderly people who died as the territory was gripped by a rare cold spell, with the death toll rising to 29 this week.

Some newspapers put the toll at 31, as temperatures fell well below 10 degrees Celsius (50 Fahrenheit).

A government spokesman said the deaths could not be blamed on the cold and that autopsies had yet to be carried out. The social welfare authorities denied any negligence on their part.

Patricia Chu, assistant director of social welfare, told reporters the government was not prepared for the cold spell which began Monday when temperatures

in Hong Kong dropped to their lowest in 45 years at six degrees Celsius (43 Fahrenheit).

"We were told by the Royal Observatory that the temperature could drop to 10 degrees Celsius or below, but we did not expect the cold weather would last so long," Ms. Chu said.

"It's rare in Hong Kong. The people killed were unfortunate. We regret that," she added.

Commenting on the deaths of elderly people, who mostly lived alone, and of the homeless, the English-language South China Morning Post said in an editorial that efforts to reach out to those at risk were inefficient.

"But there will be little

improvement in services or reduction in the numbers at risk unless Hong Kong searches its soul and re-examines its social priorities," it said.

Meanwhile, the Social Service Department went ahead with the supply of blankets to the homeless — estimated at several thousands — while neighbours were urged to look after elderly people living alone.

The China-backed Wen Wei Po daily complained in an editorial of "people being frozen to death in the streets" and said "the government should not deny its responsibility."

Law Chi-Kwong, head of Hong Kong University's Social Work Department, said poverty was the main cause of the deaths.

Sexual violence entitles women to refugee status

GENEVA (R) — Women who have been raped, suffered sexual violence or fear female circumcision are entitled to refugee status if they leave their country, the United Nations has declared.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) urged more countries to follow Canada and the United States in drafting guidelines recognising a woman's right to international protection against "gender-based persecution".

Representatives from 16 Western countries attended the UNHCR's first two-day symposium on the sensitive subject.

The Geneva-based agency wants governments to interpret the 1951 U.N. Refugee Convention as including sexual violence along with discrimination by race, nationality and religion among the grounds for justifying an applicant's "well-founded fear of persecution".

"Women who flee gender-based persecution, however small their number, should not be turned away from your borders or refused recognition as refugees," Wairimu Karago, deputy head of UNHCR's Division of International Protection, said in a speech.

"They are not a threat — they are themselves threatened — and humanity dictates that they receive protection and refugee status," she added.

In a bid to reassure Western governments that granting such recognition would not open floodgates to millions of female asylum-seekers, Ms. Karago, who is Kenyan, told delegates: "UNHCR in no way foresees large outflows of women seeking asylum in your countries because of policies such as these."

But UNHCR officials acknowledged that they faced an uphill battle in convincing traditional societies in Asia and Africa to accept principles such as reproductive health rights.



Children stand on a railway track and climb on a train after opposition protesters stopped it on the outskirts of Dhaka during the start of an opposition-led "non-cooperation" campaign Saturday. The campaign, which forced stoppages of transport and ports, had been called to protest general elections which were held on Feb. 15 that opposition parties boycotted (Reuters photo)

Senior opposition leader arrested; 1 dead, 14 hurt in Bangladesh clashes

DHAKA (AFP) — A senior Bangladeshi opposition leader was arrested Saturday during clashes that left one dead and at least 14 people injured as Prime Minister Khaleda Zia vowed to resist the latest shut-down here.

Witnesses said police picked up Motia Chowdhury along with another woman opposition leader in a jeep and whisked them away during picketing near the high-security government secretariat complex.

Meanwhile, a 55-year-old man identified as Ashraf died in central Dhaka's Tejgunipara area in a bomb blast, police said, but gave no further details.

In other incidents police fired tear gas and used truncheons to disperse bomb-blasting opposition activists in front of the nearby National Press Club.

Photojournalist Shahid Shikder, who works for a small local daily, was severely beaten up by police and paramilitary forces and was hospitalised with his left hand broken, witnesses said. Two others were also injured in the incident.

In the Mahakhali area, men on motorbikes believed to be pro-government activists stormed separate rallies held by the opposition Awami League and the Jatiya Party and set off crude bombs, a journalist at the scene said. Police intervened as clashes erupted leaving seven people injured there.

Earlier Saturday, strikers and pro-government supporters were locked in a brief gun battle in suburban Sayedabad bus terminal, that links Dhaka with southeastern port city of Chittagong, leaving four people hit by bullets. Police fired tear gas and used truncheons to quell the situation.

The violence amid the latest three-day stoppage in Bangladesh's nearly two-year-old political crisis came as Prime Minister Khaleda Zia toughened her stand against the stoppage, billed by the opposition as "civil disobedience."

In a statement the Home Ministry accused the opposition of "illegal activities even terrorist acts in the name of political programmes."

The government statement called on Bangladeshis to maintain "normal life" and assured vehicle owners that they would be compensated for damage during the shut-

down. The opposition called the strike — the latest in a series over the 22 months of political stalemate here — in a bid to force fresh polls and the cancellation of the results of controversial bloody parliamentary elections held on Feb. 15.

In another incident, the fire brigade was called in to help police clear human excreta splashed on the gates of the government secretariat complex by unidentified people early Saturday, security sources said.

There was thin attendance at the complex, housing most ministries, while banking sources said skeleton staff handled only urgent international correspondence.

Saturday and Sunday are working days in predominantly Muslim Bangladesh. The government earlier ordered civil servants and its employees to report to work Saturday or face disciplinary action.

Witnesses said Mrs. Khaleda's ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) activists sped through Dhaka streets briefly on empty buses in a bid to break the strike.

But the opposition enforced the shut-down, forcing private offices, schools, banks and shops to close, just as Bangladesh would have been getting back to work after the end of a national religious festival.

More than 5,000 security forces guarded possible trouble spots as opposition pickets took to the streets, empty of vehicles, except for pedicabs, and turnout was thin in most private and government offices, witnesses said.

Mrs. Khaleda had warned ahead of the Feb. 15 opposition-boycotted elections — described as "seriously flawed" by independent observers — that she would take "stern measures" after the festival.

Main opposition leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed appealed for people to unite and join the campaign to "unseat the illegal and autocratic government to ensure voting rights."

"There was no election on Feb. 15, but only fraud," she said in a statement.

The BNP won a landslide victory against 41 minor groups or independents, but the major opposition groups did not field candidates.

Dini, Di Pietro shake up Italian politics

ROME (Agencies) — Italian politics was in turmoil Saturday after outgoing Prime Minister Lamberto Dini announced he would form a new party and former star magistrate Antonio Di Pietro said he would not run for office in the next election.

Mr. Dini, a former central banker who belongs to no political party, ended weeks of speculation about his future when he said late Friday he would form a new centrist party for the April 21 general election.

President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro dissolved parliament a week ago when hopes of pulling both blocs together in a cross-party government charged with enacting much-needed constitutional and electoral reforms evaporated.

Far-right leader Gianfranco Fini, who had personally asked Mr. Dini not to run for office so as to maintain the neutrality of his technocrat government during the election campaign, called the outgoing premier unscrupulous, ambitious and unworthy.

"But the centre-left, whose parties supported Mr. Dini's government, said it was pleased by the prospect of a potentially power-winning coalition with Mr. Dini.

"I'm sincerely delighted that Dini should decide to take part in the forthcoming elections, making explicit reference to the forces that have supported his government," said Romano Prodi, head of the centre-left Olive Tree Coalition.

"Dini's arrival completes the democratic coalition which we hope will have the responsibility of governing this country in the next legislature," Mr. Prodi added.

Opinion polls show the rival political blocs are running neck-and-neck but newspapers said Saturday that Mr. Dini's party could lure key moderate voters away from the centre-right.

But Mr. Di Pietro, who is still Italy's most popular public figure after spearheading the "clean hands" corruption probes that toppled the political old guard, will not be among them.

Courted by both political blocs as a certain vote-winner, Mr. Di Pietro also ended speculation about his political future when he confirmed late Friday that he would not seek office.

"I will not be present at the next elections...I will not participate in politics until the investigations are over, and the road is still long," Mr. Di Pietro told Italian television.

On Thursday, a judge dismissed a case against the former magistrate but he still faces two criminal hearings on charges of extortion and abuse of office. He denies any wrongdoing and says he is the victim of attempts to discredit his work.

Commentators said Mr. Di Pietro's decision was a challenge to former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who says he will be the centre-right candidate for premier despite the fact that he is on trial for graft related to his Fininvest media empire.

"Di Pietro's refusal to enter politics is a warning to all those like Berlusconi who still have unfinished legal business yet insist on running for office," La Repubblica daily said.

Meanwhile Mr. Prodi, a possible candidate for the premiership after upcoming general elections, has come under investigation for the privatisation of a food-processing company, judicial officials said Saturday.

Mr. Prodi is the former head of the state holding IRI.

His name is on a list of IRI board members, compiled by state prosecutor Giuseppe Geremia, who gave the green light to the sale in October 1993 of the company, Cirio.

He is suspected of abuse of power as IRI chief.

Texas gun law tested as man held for murder

DALLAS, Texas (R) — A Texas man has been charged with murder after shooting another motorist dead in a case that will test a controversial new state law allowing people to carry concealed weapons, police said.

Gordon Hale, 42, shot Kenny Tava in the chest with a .40-calibre handgun after a minor traffic accident in Dallas. Mr. Tava died several hours later.

Under the new state law, Mr. Hale was legally entitled to carry a concealed handgun. He used it when the unarmed Tava began punching him in the face as they argued over who was to blame for the accident. The law allows a person with a valid gun permit to use deadly force when threatened with death or, in some cases, in order to defend property.

But police said they believed Mr. Hale had no justification to shoot Tava and charged him with murder. "We would not have filed murder charges if we didn't think it was merited," police spokeswoman Vicki Hawkins said.

A grand jury will decide whether or not to indict Mr. Hale on the murder charge. Mr. Tava's death is the first test of the Concealed Handgun Law and sparked renewed debate, with radio talk shows taking dozens of calls from Texans on the issue.

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Venezuela denies police replaced convicts for Pope

CARACAS (R) — Venezuelan officials have denied that the government replaced prisoners with police when Pope John Paul II blessed convicts at a prison on his recent visit. They said police were present on security duty, not to impersonate prisoners as some Venezuelans have charged.

"Yes, there were police officers there. They were there for security reasons," said a Justice Ministry official who asked not to be named. Church leaders, who hoped the stop at Catia would draw attention to human rights abuses in Venezuela's overcrowded jails, later accused the government of spoiling the event by removing prisoners from the windows facing the Pontiff.

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Witch doctor finds ancestor's skull in Scotland

LONDON (R) — A South African witchdoctor said he had discovered the skull of his ancestor, an African king, in a forest in the highlands of Scotland. Chief Nicholas Gcaleka arrived in Scotland earlier in the week on his quest for the missing skull of his great, great uncle, King Hintsa. He says King Hintsa was shot by a British soldier 160 years ago during the Cape colony wars and that his head was taken back to Scotland as a trophy.

Chief Gcaleka said the "spirit of a hurricane" had told him the skull would be found in a forest in a spot marked by a white pony. A spokesman for the chief said he found it in a remote forest cottage north of Inverness, with horses grazing nearby.

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China researchers revive ancient ant wine recipe

BEIJING (R) — A Chinese medical research centre has revived an ancient imperial wine recipe using the healing properties of ants, the economic daily said.

The Nanjing Jintan Ant Research Heating Centre in eastern Jiangsu province developed Chinese ant-killing wine on the basis of an ancient recipe and modern discoveries concerning the medicinal qualities of ants, the newspaper said.

It said the wine is effective in treating rheumatism, strengthening muscles and bones, boosting the immune system and preventing senility.

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Russian officers check the documents of an old woman in the street in Grozny. Security has been beefed up in the Chechen capital in fear of possible anti-government actions in connection with the anniversary of the 1944 deportation of the Chechen people to Central Asia by Soviet dictator Josef Stalin (Reuters photo)

Russian democrats try to close ranks amid Communist challenge

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian democratic leaders, whose personal rivalries contributed to the Communist election victory in December, are trying to close ranks ahead of the June presidential polls in a move which could benefit Boris Yeltsin.

The Russian president, trailing in opinion polls well behind Communist candidate Gennady Zyuganov, can take heart from the announcement by 10 leading reformers Friday that they would pool their efforts to resist the threat of a "new totalitarianism" in Russia.

Mr. Yeltsin himself initiated the creation of two centrist blocs last spring to rally divided democratic forces. Only one of the blocs — Our Home Is Russia, led by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin — broke through the five per cent barrier to gain seats in parliament, polling third behind the Communists and the ultranationalist Liberal Democratic Party in December.

The 10 democrats who signed the joint statement included liberal presidential candidate and Yabloko Party leader Grigory Yavlinsky and former Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, who pioneered economic shock therapy in Russia.

They vowed to "coordinate the actions of democratic forces," urging "all Russians who cherish liberty" to prepare to "work for our common victory."

They declared themselves "determined to resist the threat of new totalitarianism."

However, the document avoided naming the Communist Party as the new threat.

The Russian daily Kommersant commented that "the democrats now have to cross such thin ice to unite that no other text would have had a chance of being adopted."

The statement did not say whether the reformers would rally behind one single candidate, but analysts here predict that many democrats will back Mr. Yeltsin as the candidate most likely to face Mr. Zyuganov in a second round run-off in four months' time.

The signatories included parliamentary deputies Ella Pamiłova, Galina Starovoitova, Irina Khakamada, Yuri Chernisbenko and Sergei Belazertsev.

Only two weeks ago Mr. Gaidar had urged Mr. Yeltsin not to run for a second term, saying his candidacy would boost the Communists' chances.

Mr. Yeltsin, 65, who announced on Feb. 15 that he would seek re-election, set off

alarm bells in the democratic camp when he purged two leading reformers from the cabinet in January, both of them long-standing targets of the Communist and nationalist opposition.

The departure of former Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais, the architect of Russia's mass privatisation, also aroused concern in the West that Mr. Yeltsin may be backtracking on the reforms.

However, despite being blamed by Mr. Yeltsin for the government bloc's poor showing in the December elections, Mr. Chubais said recently that "everything must be done to prevent the Communists returning to power, and if necessary Boris Yeltsin must be supported."

In a campaigning "State of the Nation" speech Friday, Mr. Yeltsin rounded on corrupt officials, accusing them of blocking the reforms, and pledged to pay salary and pension arrears to ease the hardships caused by economic austerity.

"Either the government defends Russian social rights or this will be done by another government," Mr. Yeltsin said, warning that "we are near a dangerous limit beyond which exhaustion and discontent may outweigh patience and hope."

Dmitry Volkov, a political observer writing in the Sevodnya daily Saturday, said Mr. Yeltsin would "turn directly to the voters later, after taking practical steps to implement his threats and pledges."

Mr. Yeltsin's generous promises to pay salary and pension arrears, compensate impoverished small investors and rebuild Chechnya could cost billions of dollars and upset the tight 1996 budget.

However, Mr. Yeltsin got a welcome boost Thursday from the International Monetary Fund, which announced a \$10.2 billion loan to consolidate Russia's market reforms.

In line with his warnings about official corruption, Mr. Yeltsin this week sacked two senior ministry officials and three regional leaders for delaying salary and pension payments, along with Yevgeny Bychkov, head of the State Committee for Precious Metals and Stones (Kordragmet).

Meanwhile, former Prosecutor-General Alexey Ilyushenko was officially charged with bribe-taking and abuse of power.

2 suspects arrested in shooting of U.S. teacher

LOS ANGELES (R) — Two reputed gang members were arrested Friday as suspects in the shooting of a fifth-grade teacher who was struck in the head by a stray bullet in front of his horrified students.

Alfredo Perez, 30, was listed in critical condition at Martin Luther King Jr. Drew Medical Centre after undergoing emergency brain surgery Thursday night.

Taking time out from his tour of southern California, President Bill Clinton called Mr. Perez's wife to offer his support and also gave students a brief telephone pep talk that was broadcast over loudspeakers at the teacher's school.

Frazier Joseph Francis, 18, turned himself in early Friday and was being held on \$500,000 bail on a charge of attempted murder. Police said he fired the shot that hit Mr. Perez.

Following his mother's public appeal, 22-year-old Zerron Martinez White gave himself up to police accompanied by a local television reporter. Police said Mr. White was with Francis at the time of the shooting and is considered an accomplice.

Mr. Perez, a popular teacher respected by students and parents, was in the ground-floor library of the Figueroa Street Elementary School in south-central Los Angeles when an errant bullet tore into his forehead Thursday shortly after school began.

The shots were fired from across the street during an apparent gang-related dispute, said police Lt. Robert Salkeld.

Frightened students ran from the room and huddled in a hallway while administrators ran to the library, where Mr. Perez sat in a chair with a bullet hole in his forehead. "They shot my teacher," one girl said. "I was talking to him and he didn't talk to me."

Another bullet flew into a second-floor classroom full of students and lodged in a wall. Counsellors were sent to the school to help students cope with the traumatic experience, and many parents kept their children home from school Friday.

Mr. Perez's wife Virginia, who teaches at another elementary school, was at her husband's bedside. He was breathing with the aid of a respirator.

Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, a multi-millionaire businessman, promised to provide the school with bullet-proof windows, even if he has to pay the \$80,000 out of his own pocket.

Russian troops reportedly round up male civilians in Novogrozny

BACHI-YURT, Russia (Agencies) — Russian troops separated male villagers from their families and took them to an unknown destination after entering the eastern Chechen town of Novogrozny, witnesses told AFP Saturday.

Women who fled to the neighbouring village of Bachi-Yurt from Novogrozny after the Russian troops entered Wednesday said the Russians opened fire in the streets and then forced civilians to leave the cellars where they were hiding from the bombardment.

The male inhabitants were taken to an unknown destination, several of the women said.

The Russian military command announced late Wednesday that its forces had ousted Chechen separatists from Novogrozny and "seized" the town after a siege lasting several days.

However, the separatists said their fighters had left the town before federal troops entered.

Novogrozny had some 15,000 inhabitants before the war in Chechnya started in December 1994.

Malika Achkhoyeva, 43, said that "when the Russians entered the town we heard shooting but were careful not to leave the cellar."

"Finally they came and ordered everybody to leave. There were about 25 of us, men and women divided equally. They took the men away. Two old men over 70 returned two hours later and said the Russians had released them, but they didn't know where the others had been taken. There were hardly any young men — the men were aged between 40 and 60."

Since the Chechnya war started Chechen men suspected of being separatist fighters or sympathisers have been detained in Russian "filtration centres," where they are interrogated and frequently beaten up, witnesses have reported.

Novogrozny was still sealed off Saturday.

Meanwhile, Russian forces continued pounding the nearby villages of Tsentoroy and Alleroy, an AFP reporter on the scene said.

Inhabitants of the villages, which have been under bombardment for several days, were sheltering in cellars, only daring to venture out at night for supplies.

Meanwhile Russian troops massed Saturday in the mountain areas of Russia's ethnic Republic of Ingushetia as local officials accused "dark forces" in Moscow of trying to drag the region into the war in neighbouring Chechnya.

At least 60 tanks and armoured vehicles took up positions near the settlement of Galashki just 10 kilometres away from the Ingushi village of Arshty which residents say has been sealed off and attacked by Russians.

Every now and then helicopter gunships passed through the misty skies to disappear in the direction of Arshty. Heavy explosions, which sounded like artillery shells, came from the direction of Arshty.

Russian troops would not comment on their mission or what was happening in the mountainous villages where Russian military officials in Moscow said Chechen rebels had set up a base.

A resident of Arshty who fled to Galashki said there had been no Chechen rebels in his village.

"There are no fighters there and there have never been," said the young man who gave only his first name, Bak. "They (Russians) are killing innocent people."

The rocky and muddy mountainous road to Arshty was impassable beyond Galashki about 40 kilometres south of the Ingushi capital Nazran, and the only way to get to Arshty was from Chechen territory sealed off by Russian troops.

Ingushi Vice-President Boris Agapov told a news conference in Nazran that at least two local residents were killed and another nine wounded in Russian artillery attacks on Arshty in the last 24 hours.

The Russian Defence Ministry has denied sending any troops to Ingushetia. They said they were carrying out an anti-rebel operation in western Chechnya.

Ingushis have close ethnic links with the Chechens. More than 100,000 Chechens have found refuge in Ingushetia since Russia moved troops in December 1994 to quell Chechnya's independence bid.

Mr. Agapov said unspecified forces in Russia were trying to drag his region into the Chechen conflict, ultimately aiming to destabilise the political situation in Russia and give a pretext for cancelling a presidential election due on June 16.

"Forces that do not want the (presidential) election, that aim at destabilising Russia are to blame," Mr. Agapov said when asked who was responsible for the incident.

President Boris Yeltsin, who announced plans last week to seek re-election, is likely to face strong competition from Gennady Zyuganov, leader of the resurgent Communist Party.

"The Russians want to start the war all over the Caucasus," said Dikhan Hashiev, 32, a Galashki resident. "It's Yeltsin's last chance. If he sees he can't win the election he will have an excuse to cancel it."

Mr. Yeltsin told Russian media chiefs Wednesday that he would not allow the postponement of the polls.

Mr. Agapov suggested that the Ingushi incident was a follow-up to a Russian military operation in the ethnic Republic of Dagestan which borders Chechnya to the east.

Last month Russian troops completely destroyed the Dagestani village of Pervomayskoye in the course of an operation to release hundreds of hostages kept there by Chechen rebels.

"They failed to drag Dagestan in the war so they are now trying to do this with us," Mr. Agapov said.

Dole, Forbes seek revival in Delaware primary race

WILMINGTON, Del. (R) — Delaware voters cast their ballots Saturday in a Republican presidential primary that has Senator Bob Dole seeking his first primary victory and publisher Steve Forbes trying to rebound from weak showings.

Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. est (1200 GMT to 0100 GMT Sunday) in the state's first-ever presidential primary to choose 12 Republican and 18 Democratic presidential delegates.

Most major candidates have shunned the race because of a dispute between Delaware and New Hampshire, which urged a candidate boycott to protect its status as the nation's first primary state by at least a week. The Delaware election is only four days later.

However, Mr. Forbes campaigned heavily in the state through Friday evening, and Sen. Dole dipped his foot in the waters, addressing by telephone a news conference Wednesday at which U.S. Senator William Roth and other state party leaders endorsed him.

Sen. Dole won the Iowa caucus vote earlier in February, which garnered him 25 delegates, but a slim New Hampshire loss to Pat Buchanan was an unwelcome setback.

Of two pre-election polls this week, one by the Wilmington News Journal showed Sen. Dole with a 32 to 21 per cent lead over Mr. Buchanan, the conservative commentator who narrowly beat Sen. Dole in New Hampshire Tuesday.

Mr. Forbes was third with 19 per cent and Lamar Alexander was fourth with 16 per cent. The margin for error was 4.9 percentage points in the poll conducted Wednesday and Thursday of 401 likely Republican voters.

The other poll, for NBC affiliate WCAU in Philadelphia, showed Sen. Dole and Mr. Forbes to be in a statistical dead heat, at 28 per cent for Sen. Dole, 27 for Mr. Forbes, 22 for Mr. Buchanan and 14 for Mr. Alexander. The poll surveyed 1,000 likely voters Wednesday evening, and had a margin of error of 4.5 per cent.

"I still expect to win here," Mr. Forbes told Reuters Friday after the News Journal poll was released. He named a new campaign chairman Thursday and vowed to remain



Republican presidential candidate Pat Buchanan talks with reporters outside his Phoenix hotel before attending an Arizona Right to Life breakfast. Mr. Buchanan is campaigning in Arizona which will hold its presidential primary on Feb. 27 (Reuters photo)

in the race, despite fourth-place showings in Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire.

Sen. Dole, stung by his loss to Mr. Buchanan, cautiously appraised his chances Wednesday, saying he believed he had "opportunities" in the Delaware primary, but that negative advertising by Mr. Forbes had been politically damaging.

Mr. Buchanan has not campaigned in the Delaware race.

Mr. Forbes and radio commentator Alan Keyes were the only active candidates to register for the primary. Mr. Alexander, Mr. Buchanan, and Sen. Lugar were added after the state legislature retaliated against New Hampshire's boycott calls by allowing parties to place the name of any significant candidate on the ballot.

State Republican Party Chairman Basil Battaglia has said he was hoping for a 20-25 per cent voter turnout. There are 385,975 registered voters in Delaware, including 163,474 Democrats and 138,924 Republicans. The state's population is about 700,000.

Meanwhile Mr. Buchanan was beckled by Hispanic students Friday as he pledged to stop illegal immigration during a campaign swing through the border state of Arizona.

The conservative populist had a verbal confrontation with a group of Hispanic students when he delivered a campaign speech to about 100 people at a small community centre in the cotton and wheat-farming town of Gila Bend, 80 kilometres southwest of Phoenix.

Mr. Buchanan has angered many Hispanics by pledging, if elected, to build a security fence along the U.S. border with Mexico to stop illegal immigration.

That controversial proposal is drawing attention in this state hording Mexico in the days before next Tuesday's Arizona primary.

"You've got no right because they've got a lousy government down there (in Mexico), to walk across the borders of the United States of America with impunity, because this is my country," Mr. Buchanan said.

"When I am president of the United States, we're going to defend that border the way we defend any border of the United States of America," he said to loud applause from the largely white crowd.

Christopher to make first South America tour in years

WASHINGTON (R) — Warren Christopher sets off Sunday on the first major trip in more than seven years by a U.S. Secretary of state to Latin America, the vast and neglected region at the doorstep of the United States.

Though always an important region for U.S. business, politically Latin America was synonymous in the past with military dictatorships — some of them tacitly or openly backed by Washington — coups and drugs.

Drugs are still a problem, but Washington now sees South and Central America and the Caribbean as firmly embarked on the road to democracy and free-market economics, with only one country — Cuba — still under authoritarian rule.

A "summit of the Americas" held in December 1994 mapped out as key themes for the region: Political and economic openness, the fight against international crime and drug trafficking, protecting the environment and combating poverty.

But that summit was held in Miami, and it is only now that Christopher is saluting the region's shift away from its violent past with a five-nation tour, the first full-scale visit since one by George Shultz in 1983.

Mr. Christopher, who in more than three years in office has made 17 trips to the Middle East in search of a peace settlement, is estimated to have spent a total of only about 24 hours in Latin America and the

Caribbean.

Mr. Christopher's eight-day tour will take him to El Salvador, Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago — all countries the United States believes have made substantial progress toward political or economic liberalism.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Alex Watson called it a trip of "dramatic significance" because "conditions in the hemisphere are dramatically different than they have been at virtually any time in the recent past."

Perhaps almost equally significant, though, are the countries Mr. Christopher is not visiting, which include Colombia and Mexico, both major transit points for U.S.-bound drugs. Mr. Christopher will, however, visit Mexico in May.

The annual U.S. "certification" of which countries are cooperating with Washington in the war against narcotics will be published during Mr. Christopher's tour.

In El Salvador, where a bloody 12-year civil war ended in 1992, he will meet all Central American heads of state except Guatemalan President Alvaro Arzu to discuss crime, drugs and illegal migration to the United States. U.S. officials said.

In Santiago, the secretary of state will look at Chile's impressive economic performance and in Buenos Aires he will discuss Argentina's contribution to U.N. peace-keeping as well as nuclear cooperation.

Hashimoto wins U.S. assurance on Okinawa

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto flew across the Pacific Friday and got what he wanted from a brief meeting with President Bill Clinton — a joint approach to resolving an explosive issue over United States military bases on Okinawa.

"I was able to receive a strong signal from President Clinton that the U.S. side was serious and earnest about the Okinawa issue," Mr. Hashimoto told a news

conference after the one-hour meeting at Santa Monica, an oceanside resort near Los Angeles.

Japanese officials taking part in the one-hour meeting said the two leaders, who were to meet again during Mr. Clinton's state visit to Tokyo in April, confirmed that their top priority was streamlining Okinawa bases.

During the coming April visit, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Hashimoto were expected to reaffirm their commitment to the 1960 U.S.-Japan security treaty, the cornerstone of bilateral ties.

In Japan's vicinity, a fierce war of words between an increasingly bellicose China and a defiant Taiwan have added to the region's security concerns, which for a long time had been dominated by the divided Korean peninsula.

People on southern Japan's Okinawa Island, with all its prime land taken by strategic U.S. military bases, suddenly erupted last

September when three U.S. servicemen were arrested for allegedly raping a 12-year old Okinawan schoolgirl.

The immediate trigger was a bilateral status-of-forces agreement which prevented Japanese police from arresting the suspects. The three servicemen were eventually handed over to Japanese police and now await their verdicts on March 7 at a Japanese court.

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Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634
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Brutality with no limits

THE MURDER in Baghdad on Friday of General Hussein Kamel, his father and two brothers could not have taken place without the blessings, even the direct involvement, of the Iraqi regime. It is inconceivable that President Saddam Hussein had intended to honour his pardon of Gen. Kamel and his brother Saddam over their defection to Jordan six months ago or taken seriously his public assurances to his two sons-in-law that their safety would be guaranteed upon their return to their homeland. The Iraqi president, it must be remembered, has no history of leniency or compassion towards even members of his own family when it came to even mild criticism of, let alone disagreement on, his policies and practices.

The fact that Gen. Kamel and his brother Saddam were forced to divorce their wives, both daughters of the Iraqi president, only hours before their murder lends weight to the proposition that the Iraqi regime was hatching a plot for them. Furthermore, no clan member of the two victims would have dared lift a finger against them without the approval of President Saddam, especially that the murder was carried out near the centre of Baghdad, where the Iraqi regime enjoys full control. The bloody shoot-out between the attackers and their victims indicated that the Kamels had sensed danger and accordingly prepared themselves for it in whatever limited way they could.

Should anybody then have tried to talk the two men out of their decision to walk right down to their death trap? Surely many people knew all along that there was no way that the regime would keep the two defectors alive after their return to their country. Thus the two hear the consequences of their decision since they, more than anyone else, knew the character and mentality of their president and father-in-law.

But over and above that the murder of Gen. Kamel, his two brothers and father, along with the continued suffering of the Iraqi people, are certainly the immediate responsibility of President Saddam whose regime has based its legitimacy solely on brutal force. That is why the Iraqi president and the ruling class around him stand to lose a great deal from what happened on Friday. Any remaining goodwill that was generated, locally or internationally, out of sympathy with the Iraqi people, will certainly not benefit a regime that does not even honour its own promises.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Rai daily Saturday described as dangerous a reported agreement reached secretly between the Israelis and the Palestinians on the prospects of creating a Palestine state. Mahmoud Rimawi said that the Israelis are luring the Palestinian leadership to hold secret negotiations while the Palestinians have no means to exercise pressure in order to secure their rights. The Israelis have been in the habit of holding such clandestine talks, which in the past resulted in the Oslo accord, to secure for themselves continued occupation of Arab lands in exchange for symbolic rights to the Palestinian leadership, he said. The Palestinians should disassociate themselves from this reported agreement with the Israeli government which has proved its determination to deprive the Palestinians of the right of controlling their lands and their fate, said the writer. Negotiations over the future of the Palestinian nation should be held in the open under the watchful eyes of the opposition groups on both sides if a solution is to last, he added. The writer said that the fate of a nation should not be left in the hands of mere group of persons even though they might be as qualified for the job as Mahmoud Abbas, the architect of the Oslo accord.

AL DUSTOUR daily Saturday expressed deep concern over the continued disturbances in Bahrain and Qatar which, it said, are aimed at destabilising the Gulf region. Acts of sabotage, murder and sedition are the work of terrorists who are resorting to violence to harm the security of this important and strategic region of the Arab World, said the paper. With its vast natural resources and its strategic depth for the Arab Nation, it also is of major significance to the world at large in view of its oil wealth, continued the daily. In following the events with feeling of anxiety and concern Jordanians are deeply saddened to see elements of extremism committing their violent acts which harm the nation's interests and cause human as well as material losses, said the paper. While condemning these acts of terrorism in the two Gulf countries, the paper expressed hope that the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council will take prompt decisions and adopt effective measures to guarantee stability and security in the Gulf region.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

RJ city air terminal — outdated, impractical idea

THE ROYAL Jordanian (RJ) announced plans to establish an air terminal near the Seventh Circle to serve its own passengers. Once the terminal is operational, a passenger can check in his luggage, pay the airport tax and receive his boarding card at the terminal, then board the next scheduled bus to the airport which leaves every hour or every half an hour as the case may be.

Those who made this decision believe that the airline would thus be providing a valuable service to its distinguished passengers, and enable the relatives and friends of the traveller to see him off at the 7th Circle rather than at the airport, which will save time and money.

This project is not new. The airline contemplated the idea of having a city terminal 15 years ago. It was actually decided to build an air terminal at a spot near Saqra Circle in cooperation and partnership with the Amman Development Corporation, which was managed by Engineer Sami Al Rashid, and the Housing Bank.

However, for some good reason, and after a thorough study, Alia, as the Royal Jordanian airline was called at the time, decided to abandon the idea. The corporation built instead King Abdullah Gardens in the same location which was previously earmarked for the city terminal.

Since I was then the vice president finance of the airline, and participated in the evaluation of the project and the decision against it, I feel compelled to remind the current decision makers, within the corporation and without, of the reason why we abandoned a similar project 15 years ago.

At the time, we realised that city terminals did exist in some old cities like Paris and New York, but they are not being utilised fully. City terminals, we found, belong to the past, and now are history. The establishment of new city terminals ceased at least 25 years ago. In other words, some city terminals which existed before 1995 continued to function at the margin, but no new city terminal was established often that date in any city in the

world.

I was therefore surprised that, 15 years later, i.e. when the latest city terminal is at least 40 years old, somebody re-discovers this obsolete and defunct idea, which will cost thousands if not millions of dinars, when RJ management should be busy trying to reduce cost and improve the economics of the airline to make it acceptable to investors, when the corporation will be subjected to privatisation before the end of this year.

Building a city terminal in Amman is not a priority. It is unnecessary. It entails big administrative and operational expenditures, not only to the debt-ridden airline but also to the tight-budget Public Security and Customs departments, and other related authorities, over and above the capital outlays for construction, equipment, furniture, decoration and transport buses.

Perhaps, a city terminal would be convenient to families living around the 7th Circle, but the people of the rest of Amman and of all the other 12 governorates would rather go straight to the airport and avoid double check-in and security formalities, the inconvenience of having to come to the terminal three hours before departure, etc. As a matter of fact, many air travellers are not fond of riding crowded buses and may like to go through all the formalities of checking-in, including security, in one place rather than two.

It goes without saying that passengers arriving at the Amman airport would not use the terminal and buses to avoid double loading and unloading, let alone inevitable delays.

The manager or advisor, who reinvented the obsolete idea of a city terminal four decades after the world abandoned it, may be an excellent pilot, but his commercial and financial credentials may be found wanting.

It is up to the government to abort this flight before it takes off.

Media influences swell in the new world environment

By Boutros-Boutros Ghali

UNITED NATIONS

The international community faces a new world environment, marked by global and internal forces. The list of problems and prospects that have emerged is long and familiar. The solutions, however, are far from clear. But one thing is certain: everyone must share in the work — not only the states that make up the international system, but also the rapidly expanding array of new actors of increasing influence on world affairs, including parliamentarians, regional organisations, non-governmental groups, academia, trans-national business and the media.

A global framework for a division of labour already exists. It is called the United Nations. But the search for the right division of labour cannot move forward until all concerned expressly determine to use the United Nations for this essential task.

For the United Nations, this has meant a constant effort to raise awareness of the new actors on the international scene and to engage their cooperation. Of all the new actors, one of the most influential, yet least recognised as an international actor in its own right, is the media. Thomas Jefferson famously declared that he would prefer newspapers without government to a government without newspapers. Jefferson's advice may still be correct, but the power and prestige of what we call

"the media" have outstripped our ability fully to understand this phenomenon.

The media today are as important as government at all levels of human society, local to global. Of even greater significance is the media's impact on government itself. The media convey information directly to individuals. The media conduct opinion polls, which appear to have "scientific" validity. The media take editorial positions based on public opinion. This process is transforming democracy, even as a wave of democratisation sweeps the globe.

For the past two centuries it was law that provided the source of authority for democracy. Today, law seems to be replaced by opinion as the source of authority, and the media serve as the arbiter of public opinion. The implications of this transformation are vast but as yet are not clearly understood. What is clear is that media in all its forms — print, image and electronic impulse — must be free. Freedom of the media can be denied in many ways. Presses can be smashed. Journalists can be kidnapped or shot. And there are still other, insidious ways effectively to curb the freedom of the press. When considering the media as a new international actor, the number one principle must be its freedom. Every effort must be made to uphold the words of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right... to seek,

receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." Other principles, scale, time and thought given to serious topics, also deserve attention and respect, even if they cannot be perfectly achieved.

Universality of coverage, is an important objective. Press attention is like a beam of light which illuminates where it shines, but leaves all else in obscurity.

In Angola, where a U.N. mission is working in reconciliation, more people have died than in all other current operations around the world put together. But the public knows very little of Angola.

Comprehensive coverage is also worth striving for. This may mean going back to report on a story when the main excitement is over. El Salvador was given space and time when the war was raging, but not much is reported on the remarkable achievements since then. The aftermath of a story is rarely as captivating as the fast-breaking developments at the start. But the long-term consequences may be more significant, for far more people.

Intellectual coverage is also of value. This is not to suggest that a newspaper should try to resemble an academic journal, but that ideas can often be more important than actions. Events dominate our lives, but trends of thought may be far more significant in shaping the future. This is a time in history when ideas are greatly in demand. The current contest of ideas

about peace, development and democracy is a legitimate and important topic for media attention. These principles dovetail with the priorities of the United Nations.

The U.N. must by definition be universal. The U.N. must always try to stay the course until a long-term mission is complete. And the U.N. must both reflect and generate ideas, with the aim of establishing norms and standards for international progress.

Today a new international system needs to be constructed. A new structure for global stability and peace must be built. A new rationale and action plan for development must be achieved. International law must be revitalised. Human rights — including the right of free expression in all form — must be reaffirmed and defended. Throughout the United Nations, the new system is being constructed on the most compelling cases as they arise. There have been setbacks. There also have been successes. The successes have been hard-won, but are more likely to endure for just that reason. This process of change is not only necessary but proper. History has demonstrated that after the end of one era, it takes time to shape the next one. This can only be done if the leading member states of the United Nations, and the new actors on the world scene, including especially the media, are ready for cooperative endeavour in the cause of a better future for people everywhere.

Interpress Service

Decentralised government does not mean dispersed offices

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

THE DRIVE to decentralise the government has been seen by many as a positive step towards the efficient allocation of our resources. To further insure our economic future, we have also introduced new laws that are supposedly designed to help investors and ordinary citizens in the conduct of their affairs by streamlining procedures and making government policies more transparent.

However, in the midst of all these grand designs and multi-million dinar projects, there exists a phenomenon that is so annoyingly wrong and simultaneously wasteful of our sparse resources that it boggles the mind. This phenomenon is the haphazard scattering all over Amman of governmental offices even though these offices may carry complementary functions. In other words, instead of having facilities that pertain to a certain service located close to each other or in the same vicinity, the distance between two signatures on a piece of paper may be many miles and many hours in real space.

New and past cabinets have, for some incomprehensible reasons, chosen to scatter the offices of the government all over the ever growing Amman which is contrary to what is done in the industrial world: offices that perform related functions are placed close to each other.

For example, a person who is looking for investments in Jordan has to visit the Ministry of Industry and Trade which is located in the Shmeisani area. If, while at the ministry, he is informed about the recently established Investment Promotion Corporation, he will find himself trucking up to somewhere near the end of Mecca Street, on an obscure hard-to-find street, in a newly established neighbourhood, looking for a building that is impossible to locate. (As a Jordanian and one of the few, true Ammanites, I got lost for a good half hour before finding the Investment Promotion Corporation). I dare not imagine how long it would take a Western investor who is used to streets with numbers and directions displayed on correctly detailed up-to-date maps to find it. And I really would hate to imagine how much money is lost due to the location of our government offices.

And what about the employees? Those civil servants that do not have government cars at their disposal are, I am sure, finding it harder and harder to get to work.

I will not mention any other examples, although they are plentiful, but I am sure that this phenomenon is one that deserves special attention from planners and decision makers.

In a country where cars are very expensive in absolute and relative terms, it is unfathomable that government officers choose to create physically separated offices that are impossible to find, thereby placing a hardship on not only themselves but also on their fellow employees, and their client — the public.

Furthermore: "The distance between government offices offers each office a feeling of autonomy: they become little fiefdoms. And since communications between agencies or offices is not sophisticated enough, this simple act of physical separation allows management freedom from monitoring. This further contributes to corruption, laziness and waste."

"Since communications between agencies or offices is not sophisticated enough, this simple act of physical separation allows management freedom from monitoring. This further contributes to corruption, laziness and waste."

The decision makers who choose the locations of these buildings are usually higher up in the ranks and are issued government cars. These are of a better quality than those of the average employee/citizen and they do not have to buy their own gasoline — the ever so-expensive gasoline is theirs for free. So neither the fixed cost of the car nor the variable cost of the gasoline is a hindrance to these privileged employees. The isolation of their little "states" entails no private cost to them, at huge public costs.

The typical Jordanian manager derives his power from the amount of information he has gathered and hidden, and not from the amount of information he has contributed or made available. Therefore, a separate building that is far away from other competitors allows him to retain whatever information he has without having to divulge it to others. The result is a breakdown in the information flow of the country. Amazingly enough, we continue to encourage this lack of information disbursement throughout our economic landscape by dispersing the physical structures of the government.

An agency that is hard to reach, especially one that is a service provider, does not have to provide the service because no one can reach it or find it. So a far flung department gives its employees the chance not to work hard and the opportunity to work at their own competence level which decreases with time.

So what is lost? Just time and money.

Fresh corruption victims leave India election open

By Paul Iredale

REUTERS

NEW DELHI — India's political corruption scandal has netted a fresh catch of victims of all political colours, leaving analysts guessing who will gain advantage from the affair in general elections expected in two months.

As India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has announced charges in the \$18 million bribes-for-favours scandal against 14 more politicians, including four ministers who resigned this week and two opposition leaders, few were prepared to predict where the affair would end.

Key to the issue is whether India's wily 73-year-old prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao is playing the nets or whether he is just another big fish trying to avoid being caught.

"Which came first, the chicken or the egg the prime minister's grand design or the resolve of the supreme court that enough was enough and if the government would not do their duty the court would compel obedience to the rule of law?" the statesman newspaper asked on Friday.

When the scandal broke in mid-January, the accepted wisdom was that Rao was pulling the ropes.

The CBI, after all, reported to the prime minister the affair

lay fallow since it was uncovered in 1991, only to resurface in the run-up to elections and the first victims included the leader of the main opposition party and a cabinet minister who posed a possible threat to Mr. Rao's leadership.

The opposition Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was certain of the political motivation.

Its president, Lal Krishna Advani, denounced the charges against him as a political frame-up and resigned his parliamentary seat, saying he would not run in the elections and would quit public life if he was proved guilty.

His colleague, Atal Behari Vajpayee, the BJP's leadership

candidate in the elections, accused Mr. Rao of accepting \$850,000 from the illegal foreign exchange, or "hawala", dealer S.K. Jain, the man whose diary of payments to politicians is at the centre of the scandal.

But then the affair seemed to take on its own momentum.

The supreme court ordered the CBI to pursue the probe against every individual involved "irrespective of the position and status of that person", a clear reference to Mr. Rao himself.

The CBI appeared to absolve Mr. Rao at Thursday's supreme court hearing, saying there was no reasonable basis for the accusation made by Mr.

Jain on March 11, 1995, the date on which he is reported finally to have said he paid Mr. Rao money.

But the supreme court would not let the matter go, and the solicitor general agreed that the investigation of this accusation would continue.

Mr. Rao has said the investigation must take its own course, and seven members of his council of ministers have now resigned and been charged since January.

While the resignations have had little effect on the running of the country, as the administration is now in its lame-duck phase prior to the elections, it has demoralised senior ranks of the ruling Congress Party.

Mr. Rao, whose party suffered setbacks in several state polls over the past year and is coming to the general elections from behind, appears to have made a virtue of the situation.

He is bypassing the congress working committee, the party's top body, in discussing electoral plans, allowing a much greater voice for the district committees with their younger blood.

"There is a feeling that Rao has initiated something important, and he may well reap the harvest," said political analyst George Verghese.

The BJP, meanwhile, which had been confident it would be the largest party after the elections, is in disarray.

Indian youth revive world's oldest martial art

By William Rhode
Reuters

CALICUT, India — In the cold light of dawn, the young warriors prepared for battle. The pungent smell of sweat mixed with oil spilled out of the mud-packed arena.

The warriors ritually touched the seven-tiered shrine to appease the seven mothers of the earth, each selecting a curved dagger from the array of vicious weapons lining the wall, and moved to the centre of the room.

They clutched their knives and stared wildly into each other's eyes as they squatted forward to protect their vulnerable midriffs.

Gurukkal, a 50-year-old exponent and teacher of kalarippayatu — the ancient martial art of India's southwestern state of Kerala — entered the room and commanded his students to attention.

"Bow down and hold the dagger with reverence," the portly Gurukkal barked at two youths.

"Attack," he commanded. Sparks flew in all directions as the two slashed, thrust and jabbed at the head sent one of the fighters into a backward roll before he sprang back, leaping high into the air to counter-attack.

Soon the fighters were breathing heavily as they grappled with each other until suddenly one dagger spiralled away into the corner, to leave one of them

disarmed.

Defenceless, he quickly undid the cloth around his waist, wrapped it in his hands and returned to war in his underwear.

His opponent swung a careless blow and allowed the defender to deftly trap the weapon in the cloth.

Then, in a series of quick movements, he twisted his opponent's arm in an unyielding grip, slipped a noose round his neck, strangling him until Gurukkal called an end to the battle.

"Ours is the mother of all martial arts — it dates back to time immemorial," Gurukkal said as the victorious apprentice unwrapped the cloth weapon around his waist.

Gurukkal said a Buddhist monk exported kalarippayatu to China thousands of years ago, laying the roots for every martial art, from karate to aikido, that exists today.

Keralan historians say that kalarippayatu dates back to an unknown world of black magic and sinister sciences.

They trace the first institutions back to the 12th century when elite fighting forces were used to settle skirmishes between medieval chieftains locked in perpetual warfare.

Kalarippayatu was almost completely wiped out by the British during colonial times. Fearing armed resistance to their rule, anyone they caught practising the skill was severely punished.

But today it is becoming

increasingly popular among local youth and the state's 250 martial art masters are steadily reasserting the tradition.

"There are more and more people taking up kalarippayatu and the art is really catching on again," said Sunil, Gurukkal's son and kalarippayatu practitioner since he was six.

"My father has difficulty selecting people because there are so many but he usually only takes on children," he added.

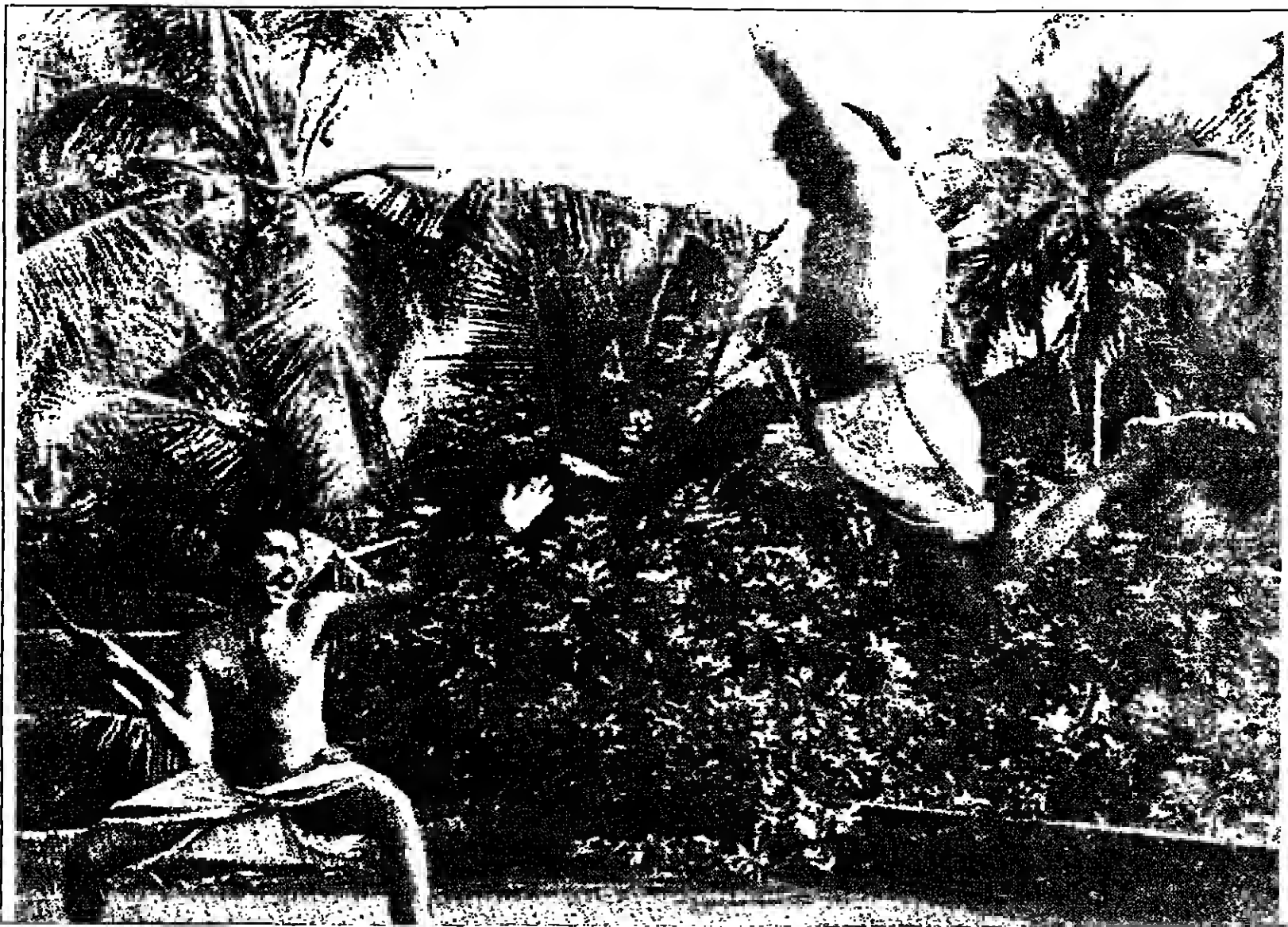
Gurukkal teaches students for free and finances the school himself through a special massage hospital for people with rheumatic pains and anhrithic disorders.

The ancient art of massage is an essential element of kalarippayatu. It uses different herbal oils to cure everything from gaping wounds to broken bones, one young gladiator said.

"We use ayurvedic oils (traditional Indian herbal medicine) to relax the muscles before contests," the adolescent apprentice said, standing on his tutor's chest and using the soles of his feet to rub medicated oils into his glistening torso.

"Each practice session costs 1,000 rupees (\$27) in blacksmiths' charges because we damage the weapons so badly," Gurukkal said as he examined the blunt double-edged flexible swords and the damaged tips of the six-foot spears.

"But we don't receive



Two warriors of kalarippayatu, the world's oldest martial art from India's south-western coastal state of Kerala, take part in a fierce battle with traditional knives in Calicut (Reuters photo)

help from the government to keep our heritage alive so we fix and make the equip-

ment ourselves." Funds have started flooding in after kalarippayatu

became an additional beautiful coastal state of

Kerala. "Foreigners have even started to study kalarip-

patayu, especially the massage part," Gurukkal beamed.

East Europe's robber barons — a law unto themselves

By Gareth Jones
Reuters

SOFIA — A stylishly-dressed man swaggers into a car showroom and says he wants to buy a Mercedes.

"But sir," says the startled salesman, recognising the customer, "you only bought one two days ago".

"Yes, but the ash-tray's full," comes the reply.

As this Bulgarian joke shows, the long-suffering citizens of Eastern and Central Europe have learned to laugh at the brazen behaviour and conspicuous wealth of the "businessmen" who have prospered since the collapse of Communism.

Whether cruising potholed streets in flashy limousines or patronising casinos flanked by sharply blondes and burly bodyguards, the "businessmen" add a dash of colour to the drabness of post-Communist life.

But the swagger and glamour conceal a world of extortion, rapacious racketeering, murder, enforced prostitution, kidnapping and smuggling of drugs and even nuclear materials.

Against the well-armed, totally ruthless battalions of organised crime, the region's elected governments and their under-funded, demoralised police forces can appear helpless.

"The fight against crime has turned out to be a much more difficult task than we expected," Bulgarian Prime Minister Zhan Videnov said recently, adding that his country's situation mirrored that in other ex-Communist states.

He was speaking days after a racketeer's bomb killed three people in central Sofia. The racketeer, who was among those killed, had wanted to extort money from an exchange bureau.

Last year Bulgaria suffered some 200 bomb explosions and nine people were killed in incidents involving racketeers.

Neighbouring Romania

also saw a steep rise in payment of protection money and corruption during 1995.

Boasting wealth that the law-enforcers can only dream about, the racketeers and smugglers often find willing accomplices among the police.

"Corruption has hit the police, with disciplinary measures being taken against 5,875 officers during the year," said a Romanian police spokesman, Colonel Nicolae Bucur.

Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev has even accused some members of his country's government of being in league with organised crime, saying they had a vested interest in doing as little as possible to combat it.

Nor is the lawlessness confined to the Balkans.

Hungary has witnessed the return of highwaymen in modern guise — gangsters in fast cars who track a bus by night after a tip-off that it is carrying passengers with money.

On a deserted stretch of road, their cars surround the bus and force it off the road. They board it, rob the passengers and leave fast.

The latter-day highwaymen are usually not Hungarians at all but Russians or Ukrainians, local police say.

Bang in the middle of Central Europe, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have also become a popular hunting ground for criminal groupings from the former Soviet Union.

Slovakia has suffered some 30 car bombings in the past two years which police largely attribute to organised gangs.

There are also signs that Slovakia and the Czech Republic have become a key corridor for illicit trafficking in nuclear materials.

Last April Slovak police netted 13.4 kg of uranium-238 which can be turned into weapon-grade material for bomb-making.

Czech interior ministry spokesman Jan Subrt has

sounded the alarm about foreign gangsters who mingle with the millions of tourists flocking to Prague every year.

The criminal groupings — from the former Soviet Union, the Balkans, the Middle East and elsewhere — often employ Czechs and Slovaks as their local agents, he told a press briefing.

Russian gangs are typically headed by a "godfather" figure with a background in the old Soviet military or economic elite. Under him are experts from the former Soviet army and kgb and beneath them the Afghan war veterans or ex-sportsmen who provide the muscle.

"They show a high degree of discipline and extraordinary brutality," said Mr. Subrt.

Their activities range from car thefts and money laundering to illegal trade in drugs and weapons for which the Yugoslav war has recently provided such a lucrative market.

The power of organised crime is a big disincentive for potential foreign investors in the region.

"Picking local partners is very difficult because foreigners have to make checks to see if they have mafia links which could bring trouble from racketeers later," said one Sofia-based businessman who declined to give his name.

The robber barons of Eastern and Central Europe are seen by some as the successors to the no-holds-barred capitalists of America's old wild West, a comparison which implies they are a necessary evil in countries undergoing economic transition.

Mr. Subrt noted that successful crooks start craving respectability and try to rejoin conventional society, sending their children to good schools and spurning their former associates.

Vespa still stinging the competition after 50 years

By Jude Webber
Reuters

ROME — The Vespa, the humble motor scooter that swept post-war Italy off its feet, is celebrating half a century as an ageless icon of street style.

Barely changed since the heyday of Rome's "Dolce Vita" when it whisked paparazzi within snapping distance of the stars, the Vespa — "wasp" in Italian — is still buzzing in its 50th year.

"It's a real myth, something unique," said Christa Solbach, president of the International Federation of Vespa Clubs.

"It had beauty, it was functional, it was comfortable, it gave you the chance to tour the world cheaply on two wheels...After the war, it was something unrepeatable."

The Vespa was the brainchild of Enrico Piaggio, the son of an entrepreneur whose aviation factory was bombed out of business at the end of World War II.

Piaggio saw the scooter, which had been around since the 1920s but was never a commercial success, as a potentially mass-market product that could get the factory running again.

The prototype, nicknamed "Paperino" or "Donald duck" because of its odd shape, was made in 1945 but Piaggio wanted something slicker.

He turned to Corradino d'Ascanio, an engineer who made his name as the inventor of the world's

first fully-functional helicopter — and who hated motorbikes.

D'Ascanio's creation, launched in April 1946, tucked the oily engine inside a rounded body at the rear, simplified the mechanics and sat the rider in comfort behind a shield.

Piaggio named it himself after taking one look at the buzzing contraption with its "bead", narrow waist and wide back tapering to a point.

"It's just like a wasp" history records him as saying. "The 1950s were the golden years," said Solbach, a German whose parents bought her first Vespa in 1953 when she was 16.

For many, the Vespa opened the door to foreign travel — Solbach married her Italian husband in 1958 after bumping into him at Vespa rallies in Vienna, Cannes and Barcelona — and clever marketing gave it a fun, fuss-free and romantic image.

The cinema jumped on the bandwagon, sending Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck scooting famously round the Italian capital on a Vespa in the 1952 classic "Roman Holiday".

Pope Pius XII even blessed a swarm of Vespas destined for a Dutch charity in the gardens of the Vatican in 1953.

Two Italians made it to the arctic circle on the scooters 10 years later.

Another adventurer, Giorgio Bertinelli, gave up his job with the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation and has been scooting

around the world for more than three years.

Now on the Asian leg of his Odyssey, he is expected to take his place in the "Guinness book of records" in the Vespa's 50th anniversary year as the first person to tour the world on one of the machines.

The swinging sixties pitted Piaggio against fellow Italian manufacturer Lambretta for the custom of a new generation of fashion fans.

Sharp-suited young "mods" rode their scooters into battle on the beaches of southern England to fight leather-clad "rockers" on their motorcycles.

Piaggio, associated by marriage with the famous Agnelli family which founded Fiat cars, is looking ahead to the next century.

The company leads the sector in Europe and is in the top four worldwide behind Japanese giants Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha.

Chairman Giovanni Alberto Agnelli, 31, whose mother was a Piaggio and whose uncle, outgoing Fiat Chairman Gianni Agnelli, has made him heir to the Fiat empire, has been driving Piaggio into Asian markets where explosive growth is setting the pace.

The company said a stock market flotation, tentatively discussed last year, was on the back burner.

Piaggio has hugely expanded its range since the first Vespa rode off the assembly line but dealers say interest in the traditional design, rather than in other, newer two-

wheelers, has surged since anniversary celebrations began.

The company plans to unveil a new-age vespa at a lavish 50th birthday gala in Rome in September.

Details are a closely-guarded secret but enthusiasts are betting the new Vespa will feature an upgraded four-stroke petrol engine, rather than the traditional two-stroke which runs on a mixture of petrol and oil.

That would conform to U.S. pollution regulations and could open up the North American market, they said.

But for some, the old ones are still the good ones.

"Everyone loves the Vespa," said collector Luigi Geronzi, who has 40, including a rare survivor of the first series produced in 1946, a racing model that is one of only seven left in the world and a 1953 Vespa with sidecar.

"Foreigners go crazy for them," said Mr. Geronzi, who has spent 20 years and thousands of dollars on his passion.

"Vespistas" have formed fan clubs in 23 countries from Japan to Finland — three more are planned in South Africa, Venezuela and New Zealand — and the vogue for vintage Vespas has gone global thanks to sales ads on the Internet.

"The Vespa story will go on," Mr. Geronzi said. "I don't think they'll ever get left behind...You just get booked."

Iraq has to be saved

(Continued from page 1)

in the region. "Jordan is the only party which has no such goals," he said.

Asked about the coming tripartite meeting with the Egyptian and Palestinian presidents, the King said it would tackle Palestinian issues and their struggle to regain their rights.

With reference to the recent government change in Jordan he said: "Change was aimed at serving the country, and the time has come for the younger generations to shoulder their responsibilities and the time has come for change and I am happy to achieve this dream."

In another interview with the Kuwaiti daily Al-Siyassah King Hussein said: "We have always called for solving Arab problems including the Iraqi-Kuwaiti dispute within the Arab fold and never supported occupation of other countries' territory."

In the interview which was conducted in 1994 but barred from publication so far and only published Friday the King said: "We have always been insisting on ending the dispute and we have always

felt that the atmosphere was ripe for it especially knowing that Kuwait had assumed an honourable stand during Iraq's war with Iran."

We recalled that during the Kuwait crisis he called the leaders of the United Kingdom and the U.S. as well as King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and that he tried unsuccessfully to contact Baghdad and deal with this affair.

"In the midst of this situation President Bush contacted me and I later visited Baghdad and talked to Saddam who promised to withdraw his forces," from Kuwait.

The King stressed that Jordan has always been against occupation of other countries' territories by force because he said Jordan had always suffered from Israel occupation.

On relations with Saudi Arabia the King said that he deeply appreciated Saudi Arabia for its national stands. "I can never forget Saudi Arabia's help to us during the various ordeals and it will be an act of ingratitude to deny Saudi Arabia's role."

Denunciation of murder marks new era

(Continued from page 1) its border with Baghdad in what would be a U.S. supported regional effort to bring down the regime of President Saddam Hussein.

King Hussein, who will travel to the U.S. on a prearranged visit on March 6, is expected to discuss the Iraqi situation with U.S. President Bill Clinton. All expectations are that the

two leaders will be willing to coordinate more closely steps to bring about political change in Baghdad.

Against such a background, the government's growing forcefulness in seeking change in Iraq will not only be packaged with a policy whose objective is to end the suffering of the Iraqis and the violation of their human rights. It would

also be pursued with a regional backing that could include assurances that the Kingdom will not be left in the cold to deal with its economic losses in the Iraqi market as the Gulf countries will open their doors to Jordanian exports that were once meant for Iraq, and reactivate the pipeline that once brought Saudi oil to Jordan.

Jordan, U.S.

(Continued from page 1)

enlist the support of the Iraqi opposition. Relations with Amman steadily deteriorated and he even warned Jordan not to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs a day before his abrupt departure.

Jordanian officials stress Hussein Kamel was "a politically spent force," once Jordan distanced itself from Iraq and allied itself more closely with the U.S., and opened the door to resuming ties with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The slain defector also pro-

vided Jordan with an opportunity to deal openly for the first time with the exiled Iraqi opposition.

Some officials see a turning for the worse in ties with Iraq in coming weeks.

"I do not think ties with Iraq will improve under the present regime. I think Iraq has understood we are against the continued existence of Saddam, that we have changed totally our policy towards Iraq," said former Foreign Minister Walid Salah.

1,000 Nazis killed

(Continued from page 1)

Among the revelations is a plan to kill six million Germans by poisoning the water in several German cities including Munich and Nuremberg.

The poison was prepared in a research institute with the approval of Haim Weizmann, who was to become the first president of Israel.

Arab Gulf economies perform better in 1995

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The economies of six Arab Gulf states performed better in 1995 due to an increase in oil prices and a surge in the private sector in some members, according to official figures.

Independent estimates had projected a growth of around 2.1 per cent in the combined gross domestic product (GDP) of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) but growth rates exceeded that level in real terms in most members.

Figures released by GCC governments and other official Arab institutions showed the GDP of three GCC countries grew by more than four per cent while rates in the remaining members averaged around 2.5 per cent.

Saudi Arabia, the world's leading oil producer and exporter, has reported its GDP grew by 4.3 per cent, nearly triple the 1994 rate. It has also projected positive growth in 1996 albeit lower than in 1995.

The Kingdom's economy, which accounts for nearly a quarter of the total GDP of the 22-member Arab League, is heavily dependent on oil given its limited industrial and farm exports compared with crude sales.

Announcing its sixth development plan last year, Riyadh said it targeted an annual growth rate of 3.8 per cent despite relatively low rate spending and expectations oil prices will not see any major increases.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), which has the second largest economy in the GCC, also benefited from the oil price rise in 1995, with its GDP surging by 6.5 per cent, according to the state-run Emirates Industrial Bank.

But the non-oil sector was also a key factor in the high growth, with most of its components soaring by between five and 12 per cent in 1995.

In Oman, the GDP was forecast to have grown by 5.3 per cent in real terms because of higher oil earnings and economic reforms, according to projections by the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund (AMF).

It showed higher oil prices boosted Oman's total exports to \$6.1 billion from \$5.5 billion and cut the budget deficit by nearly 35 per cent in the first seven months of 1995 despite higher expenditure.

Kuwait's economy, which is still recovering from the 1990 Iraqi invasion, recorded a real growth of 2.5 per cent while the budget deficit for fiscal year 1995-1996 was reduced to \$4.3 billion from \$4.97 billion.

The AMF, the Arab League's main financial organisation, also showed Bahrain's GDP was projected to have risen by 2.7 per cent in 1995 compared with earlier estimates of 2.5 per cent. The budget deficit was also sharply trimmed in the first half as oil revenues grew by around \$75 million.

The remaining GCC member, Qatar, has not published figures on its 1995 economy

but bankers said they expected positive growth rates as the oil sector had likely grown by more than six per cent.

Oil prices went up by \$1.3 to \$16.8 in 1995 and this boosted the GCC's income by around \$5.7 billion, according to bankers.

The six members, which control 45 per cent of the world's crude, produce nearly 13 million barrels per day (b/d) but around 12 million b/d are exported.

The 1995 performance was in contrast with 1994, when the economies of some members slowed down and others recorded negative growth rates. This is because oil prices declined to \$15.5 in 1994 from \$16.33 in 1993.

Official estimates did not include figures on the 1995 GDP of the 15-year-old political and economic alliance but bankers have estimated it at around \$207.6 billion, nearly 40 per cent of the total Arab GDP.

The economies of GCC nations improved in 1995 although they tightened expenditure as part of reforms triggered by weak oil prices. Spending was cut to \$68.7 billion in 1995 from \$71.4 billion in 1994.

"GCC economies will likely record positive growth rates of between one and four per cent in the coming years if oil prices maintained their present levels and investment targets were achieved," a Gulf banker said.

Newspaper names Egyptian firms for privatisation

CAIRO (R) — An Egyptian government newspaper has named 46 public-sector companies slated for partial privatisation and said the state would offer 20 per cent of the shares for sale within the next few weeks.

The sale of the first tranche of shares should raise 7.3 billion pounds (\$2.1 billion), said the newspaper Al Akhbar.

The government named some of the same companies as targets for imminent sale almost two years ago as part of a privatisation programme in which such announcements have consistently proved to be premature.

Al Akhbar, quoting Public Enterprise Minister Atef Obeid, said the names would go to the cabinet for approval this week and there would be

other preparatory meetings with the Capital Market Authority, which runs the Egyptian Stock Exchange.

The shares will be sold at a fixed price, rather than by auction, with incentives for small investors, it said.

All 46 companies are profitable and the shares will be priced to ensure a return of at least 12 per cent, it added.

Another government newspaper, Al Gomhuria, said that employees of the companies would have first option and could buy all the shares on sale if they chose.

The list includes the giant Aluminium Company of Egypt, which has been assessed at more than one billion pounds.

An aluminium company official said last week that reports of a partial privatisation this April were premature.

Another prominent company is Grand Hotels of Egypt, one of the main owners of public-sector hotels.

The others include five spinning and weaving firms, five flour or rice millers, four housing and real estate companies, three pharmaceutical companies, two electronics firms and an assortment of trading, light industrial and service companies.

After a cabinet meeting dedicated to privatisation last week, Information Minister Safwat Al Sherif said the next stage of the privatisation plan included the complete sale of 14 industrial companies, 36 hotels, six chains of department stores and the partial sale of at least 42 other companies.

Kohl wants prompt, stable euro but problems remain

BONN (R) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl is refusing to choose between making the Europe Union's (EU's) single currency rock solid and still starting it on time in 1999. He wants both.

"Stability has always been the absolute priority for me," he told German Television in an interview released ahead of broadcast on Sunday night. "But you cannot interpret that to mean I am for postponing the timetable, absolutely not."

Economists and political analysts are increasingly sceptical that many EU members will be able to meet the tough criteria for such areas as budget deficits, debt and inflation that will determine

which countries launch the euro currency in 1999.

Even Germany, which has exhorted other EU members to get their financial houses in order by the 1997 deadline to qualify, has acknowledged its public deficit will surpass the ceiling of three per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1996.

The Bild Am Sonntag weekly reported that Germany would overshoot the target again next year with a shortfall just above four per cent of GDP.

It cited a finance ministry report to parliament's finance committee that falling tax revenue stemming from Germany's economic slowdown

and its 50-point plan to cut unemployment would push the public deficit to 150 billion marks.

Finance Minister Theo Waigel dismissed the report, released ahead of publication on Sunday, as "pure speculation."

"Who can say today that we won't fulfil the criteria in 1997," he asked Reuters, pointing out the 1997 budget was not yet adopted and the impact of the jobs plan was still unclear.

He insisted Bonn was sticking to the 1999 start date for the final stage of economic and monetary union (EMU). Focus magazine said finance ministry officials were

already preparing for the event that only Luxembourg would qualify for the single currency on time.

It said they were taking the view that EMU could exist from 1999, but have no members, so that the EU would review every two years which countries were ready to join the bizarre club.

Mr. Waigel said he assumed the magazine was referring to efforts to prevent exchange rate fluctuations between the euro and currencies of those countries that fail to qualify in 1999.

Mr. Kohl, an ardent European who sees monetary union as an important milestone on the path to closer political integration, said it was time

to stop yapping, get down to work and make sure as many members as possible hit the targets next year.

"I think we should stop this discussion over who is coming now or who can and who cannot (join the single currency). Everyone has to do his homework. We Germans have a lot to do in this area," he said.

Mr. Kohl faces widespread misgivings among Germans about giving up the mark, a symbol of post-war stability and prosperity, for an untested substitute that many fear will subject its users to fierce competition from outsiders with weaker currencies.

IMF promises to police Russian loan tightly

MOSCOW (R) — A \$10.2 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund will help Russia's economic recovery but the IMF will police the deal tightly to ensure conditions are met, managing director Michel Camdessus said Friday.

Mr. Camdessus, on his second visit to Moscow in just under a year, said the funds would be released only if Russia met targets on spending, revenues and monetary growth.

"They know perfectly that if they exceed the monthly budgetary limits established in our programme we would interrupt disbursements," he said. "That is the beauty of monthly monitoring."

The IMF loan is a clear vote of confidence in Russia's economic performance before President Boris Yeltsin faces a strong communist challenge in June's presidential election.

One IMF official said Russia could receive up to four \$300 million tranches of the loan before the election.

But Mr. Camdessus said the loan was for Russia, not for Mr. Yeltsin, and he hoped a future government, even a communist one, would adopt policies that would

allow the IMF to keep paying out.

"I am not here to buy votes for President Yeltsin," Mr. Camdessus said. "I am here to design the financing programme to bring Russia to a full-fledged market economy."

Russia has already taken many steps to dismantle the Soviet-era centrally-planned economy and create a market economy, but the transformation has driven millions below the poverty line.

Mr. Yeltsin said Friday that policies to protect the poor should be given priority now.

"We called on people for a long time to tighten their belts, and people did this, but their patience is exhausted," he told parliament in his annual state of the nation address.

In a clear warning to Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, he said: "The government will either carry out its duty to defend the social and economic rights of people or this will be done by another government."

Mr. Chernomyrdin, the former head of state gas monopoly Gazprom, has emerged as the main guarantor of economic reform after

Mr. Yeltsin sacked reform chief Anatoly Chubais in January.

Mr. Camdessus said Mr. Chernomyrdin welcomed the monthly monitoring of the IMF programme.

"Chernomyrdin sees this as an instrument which is useful for him," Mr. Camdessus said. "He is very proud — and rightly so — to have complied with our agreement in 1995 and he intends to continue it to 1996."

The spending and revenue targets are one condition of the IMF loan, but Mr. Camdessus said Russia had also promised to improve banking supervision, scrap export tariffs on oil and gas and eliminate "stabilisation funds" at Gazprom and other firms.

Economists said the firms used the funds to hide profits and avoid taxation.

Mr. Camdessus said Russia had to do more to ensure taxes were paid, especially to fund increased social spending.

"Russia has allowed a cul-

ture of tax evasion to develop and must fight this," he said.

"If you are serious about social policy, you must be serious about tax collection," he stressed.

Despite President Yeltsin's tough economic programme for 1996, analysts said he would struggle to meet inflation targets while fulfilling pledges to protect the weak.

Mr. Yeltsin said in his state of the nation speech that Russia wanted to crush inflation in 1996.

That was the best guarantee of a stable life for Russians, whose patience with reform was at an end, Mr. Yeltsin said.

"The precondition for getting out of the crisis is finally reining in inflation. In 1996, it is possible and necessary to lower price rises to 25 per cent a year," he said.

Inflation, which was 131 per cent in 1995, has eaten away people's savings and plunged millions into poverty. At the same time, companies' massive debts mean

many workers have not been paid for months.

Mr. Yeltsin's inflation target was in line with the 1996 budget, which assumed a rate of 1.9 per cent a month, and with pledges Russia made to the IMF to restrict price rises to one per cent a month by the end of the year.

However, analysts said Mr. Yeltsin would probably overshoot the target.

"We believe a target of three to four per cent (a month) is more feasible, because we take into account a possible inflationary spurt in the third quarter," said analyst Dmitry Kryukov of investment house Renaissance Capital.

"I do not know what their overall strategy will be, but I believe they may slip from their target and try to get back in the second half of the year," he added.

Christopher Granville of United City Bank in Moscow said it was not clear how Russia could bring inflation down to 25 per cent.

But he added: "Inflation around 30 per cent would improve credit and payment conditions in the real economy very significantly."

Another analyst, who declined to be named, said he believed inflation would be in a range of 35 to 100 per cent. "Anything below 70 per cent would be acceptable," he said.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is a good day today to shop and market to your heart's content, but keep your wallet or purse in a safe place and don't get short-changed.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20) Study your income and see where you can cut down on expenses at this time so that you gain a quick reserve. Seek new ways to add to it.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a good day to visit your barber or beautician and improve and modernise your appearance. You are not expressing your full potential.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be with those who can advise you well today just how you can make big headway and prosperity in the days to be very successful.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Try to see of call as many good friends and fellow associates as possible today and make plans for recreation together in the days ahead.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can accomplish a great deal in public today, so get an early start on such. Be with bigwigs and express your finest talents.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Plan just how to meet the persons you admire and give you the information you need for an important project. Drive most carefully while on the highway.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) The day is good for clearing up messy and other material problems efficiently. Enjoy a hobby you like with close friends.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Have long conversations with others today so that you know just where you stand with them about any assignment. Rest up tonight.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get a new plan of action worked out so that you can handle your affairs more efficiently for the days to come, which will bring you success.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Divide your time well today so that you can handle practical affairs and then enjoy yourself with congenial friends and loved ones.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Make those improvements at home today which are needed and necessary and be creative at them so loved ones will be impressed.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

THE Daily Crossword by Matthew Higgins

ACROSS

- At a distance
- Wintery forecast
- Davenport
- Genie's home
- Exponent
- Like — of bricks
- Presidential race step, often
- Brick carrier
- Arjau
- Bristle
- Celt
- G — George
- Refutes
- Country or social end
- Smidgen
- Under water
- 33Bies' rock musical
- Woody's kid
- Presidential race step, always
- Amnoys
- Defest
- Ryan or Durine
- Boozar's affliction
- Dynamic precedent
- Frying pan
- Begged
- Paperlike cloth
- More unsightly
- One; Ger.
- Mineral spring
- Presidential race item, once
- Repair roads
- Modules
- In good shape
- Standout
- Minimal
- Frank

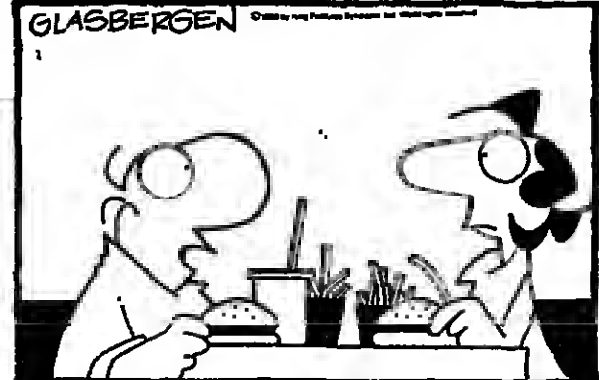
DOWN

- Coderidge's sacred river
- Card game
- Surrounded by
- Speed letters
- Carousals
- Faithful
- Basin's companion
- Conger
- Precious possession
- Gown material
- Elevator man
- Lamb
- and the King of Slam
- Indifference
- Student's aid
- Sudden wind rushes
- Extant
- Type of transit
- Gladstone name
- Fed. division
- Desiccated
- By oneself
- Blunder
- Supply for the future
- Heart chambers
- In good spirits
- Pinched
- Shattered
- Most sensible
- Chapskale
- Lists
- Stamping grounds abbr.
- Fed. agt.
- Adore
- Director Kazan
- TV staple
- North or South
- So bia it
- Feminine suffix
- Greek letter

Puzzle solved:

UMPS CLOD DEPP
ANOLE ROVE AXEL
STRAW EVEN FATA
HOTTENDERORFLAT
TARIO TOOTLE
CHEST BREAD
ALA ROUE SITKA
COURTORSOTLAND
TYLER BETS TAD
SUDSY TATAR
TESTER SEMI
SQUAREORCOUNTRY
AUNT AMUR SKATE
RIOE MINE ELLER
SPAS STEW DEES

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"I always swallow my food without chewing. It cuts down on my dental bills."

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CLUID

VARFO

PHULED

CUIMPE

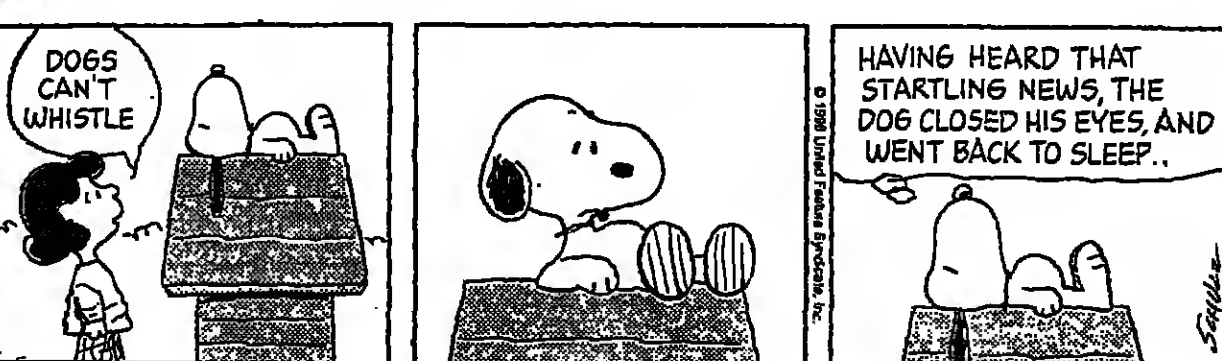
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: CLOTH VOCAL BARREN EGOISM
Answer: What the American and Russian wrestlers sought — ARMS CONTROL

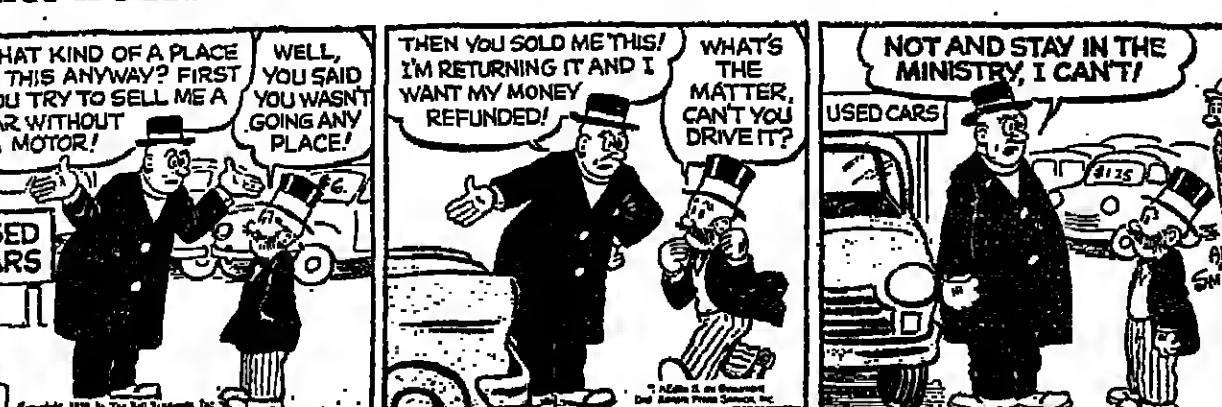
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



World Bank to lend Tunisia \$450m

TUNIS (R) — The World Bank expects to lend Tunisia a total of about \$450 million to help finance the North African country's transition to a more open economy as well as development projects, a bank official said Saturday. Fatima Felah, in charge of World Bank programmes for Tunisia, told a news conference that half of the bank's financing to the country would help it adapt to a free trade zone with the European Union (EU).

She said an estimated \$150 million credit would be aimed at improving the competitiveness of the Tunisian economy through privatisation, development of maritime transport, liberalisation of financial markets, jobs, telecommunications and the legal and fiscal frameworks.

A second \$50 million loan would target enterprises, mainly through financing sectoral technical centres, she said.

A third credit of some \$50 million is to finance a training programme, she added.

"These credits, which are aimed at supporting the Tunisian government's programme to adapt its economy to

Dubai banking sector surges in '95

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Banks in the Gulf emirates of Dubai recorded a sharp growth in 1995, with their profits rising by 17 per cent and capital and assets continuing their upward trend, official figures showed Saturday.

Net profits by the emirate's main four banks grew to a record 1.11 billion dirhams (\$302 million) in 1995 from 949.7 million dirhams (\$258.7 million) in 1994, according to figures by Ziyad Dahhas, share-dealing director at the government-controlled National Bank of Abu Dhabi.

Mr. Dahhas's study cited the balance sheets of the National Bank of Dubai (NBD), Al Mashreq Bank, Emirates Bank International (EBI) and the Dubai Commercial Bank (DCB). All of them have released their annual results for 1995.

The report showed profits by DCB jumped by around 55 per cent while growth in the earnings of the other three banks ranged between seven and 18 per cent.

The high profits achieved by these banks reflects the economic upturn in the country and the gradual growth in the performance of the banking sector in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Mr. Dahhas said.

The four banks in Dubai, the second biggest UAE member, also reported an increase of more than 10 per cent in their combined assets to around 54.2 billion dirhams (\$14.7 billion) at the end of 1995.

Loans and advances recorded a similar growth to nearly 22.4 billion dirhams (\$6.1 billion) and deposits by about 19 per cent to 40.4 billion dirhams (\$11 billion).

Their shareholders' equity, covering the capital and provisions, rose by around 12 per cent to 7.48 billion dirhams (\$2.03 billion).

This showed their capital adequacy, the ratio between the shareholders' equity and assets, far exceeded the eight per cent level set by the Bank for International Settlements as an adequacy floor for banks worldwide.

A breakdown showed the adequacy stood at 19.4 per

cent in DCB, at 16.6 per cent in NBD, 11.1 per cent in EBI and 10.4 per cent in Al Mashreq Bank.

Officials and bankers have predicted most banks in the UAE would make record profits in 1995 due to a surge in credits, mainly to trade and the construction sector.

This is because of an upswing in building and a growth in trade to 177 billion dirhams (\$48.2 billion) in 1995 from around 169 billion dirhams (\$46 billion) in 1994.

Total credits extended by the UAE's 19 national banks and 28 foreign units increased to 90.5 billion dirhams (\$24.5 billion) by the end of 1995 from around 87 billion dirhams (\$22.5 billion) by the end of 1994.

Only a few UAE banks have so far issued their 1995 balance sheets but most of them will likely announce annual results over the next

two months.

"In 1995, most banks benefited from the growth in trade, construction and real estate, the pillars of their activities. There was also a surge in personal loans," said Zuhair Kaswani, another UAE stockbroker.

"Naturally this will positively affect their performance, which was expected to hit a record in 1995. The strong performance was most evident in the steady increases in the prices of shares of most banks," he told AFP.

UAE banks, whose assets are the second largest in the Gulf after those in Saudi Arabia, made record profits in 1994 of around 2.3 billion dirhams (\$629 million). This was also because of a boom in trade and construction as a result of higher government spending on development projects.

Storm brewing in Britain's teacups

LONDON (AFP) — A storm was brewing in Britain's teacups this week as the two biggest companies in the £530 million (\$800 million) industry announced revolutionary concepts to change the nation's drinking habits.

As Brooke Bond revealed its three-dimensional pyramid teabag, which it says tastes as good as loose leaf tea, arch rival Tetley retaliated by revealing plans for a non-drip teabag.

Teabag is dead," predicted Brooke Bond's marketing director Kevin Havelock Friday.

"The tests proved that the tetrahedral teabag comes closer to allowing the tea to brew like loose tea in a teapot than any other bag," he said.

The new bag has 50 per cent more room than its conventional rivals which allows "all the tastes and aromas of the tea blend to be released in a shorter time."

P.G. Tips is the biggest teabag brand with a fifth of the market, but in teabags it is outdone by Tetley, which has no loose leaf tea in packets.

Tetley pioneered the introduction of teabags in 1933, when Brooke Bond stood aloof, claiming the new-fangled idea would never replace loose leaves in a pot. Bags however now account for 90 per cent of retail sales in Britain.

The company undertook four years of extensive research on a wide range of different shapes, including cylinders, spheres, triangles, cubes and bowler hats, before settling for the pyramid.

"This is the future. The flat

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Indian supreme Court approves telecommunication privatisation

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's Supreme Court has opened the way for privatisation of the telephone system, dismissing petitions challenging the participation of the private sector in providing basic telecom services.

A jubilant Communications Minister S. Ram lauded the court verdict as a "victory of truth" and "another feather in Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's cap."

He told a news conference the government would immediately hold a third round of tenders for eight states which did not receive any interest during a second round of bidding on Jan. 1.

The Supreme Court rejected 10 petitions opposing the multi-billion-dollar privatisation of the state-owned telecommunications monopoly and hailed the government's telecom policy as an "historic departure" from the past.

As part of free-market reforms launched after coming to power in June 1991, Prime Minister Rao invited both foreign and domestic private sector companies to provide basic and cellular telephone services.

But the court ordered the government in December to put its privatisation plans on hold until it could rule on petitions submitted by pri-

vate individuals and groups and opposition members of parliament.

The petitioners objected to the privatisation of the telephone system on various grounds, including the government's failure to establish an independent telecommunication regulatory authority before issuing tenders.

Mr. Sukh Ram saw the judgement as personal indication after coming under attack from opposition political parties who alleged he had shown favoritism in the granting of licences to a company from his home state of Himachal Pradesh.

DAILY BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

New company offers 1.25 million shares for public subscription

THE MINING Investments Company (MIC) is floating 1.25 million shares for public subscription to cover the full JD 5 million capital, 67 per cent of which was covered by 21 founders. The company, which was registered as a holding public shareholding entity under Number 305 on Jan. 9, 1996 at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, aims at managing affiliated companies or participating in the management of other companies where MIC is a shareholder. Complementary objectives are to exploit ores and to prepare studies and researches to utilise and market the mining ores. Subscription, which opens March 9, 1996, should be for a minimum of 200 shares, priced at JD 1 per share, although the first payment required is only for 25 per cent of the nominal value of purchased shares, with the rest payable over a period of four years. The main founders of MIC are: The Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JD 500,000), the Arab Potash Company (JD 500,000), the Social Security Corporation (JD 500,000), Rafiq Burghuli and company (JD 250,000), Al Hikma Investment Company (JD 200,000), Samih Darwazah (JD 100,000), the Jordan Cement Factories Company (JD 100,000), the General Mining Company (JD 100,000), the Jordan Rockwool Industries Company (JD 100,000), the Jordan Ceramic Industries Company (JD 100,000), Amin Jamil Zahran (JD 100,000), Said Al Turk (JD 100,000), the Bank of Jordan (JD 50,000) and the Jerusalem Insurance Company (JD 50,000) (Al Ra'i).

Ministry gives people second chance to demand food coupons

PERSONS WHO were not given supply coupons to enable them to purchase basic foodstuffs at subsidised prices can submit their objections to the supply directorate in their areas of residence as of today. This step was taken by the Ministry of Supply in order to give people who were unable to submit their objections during the first period, which ended last month, the chance to do so until March 14, 1996. Persons, who objected in the past but were still found not to qualify for receiving coupons need not submit new objections, an official at the Ministry of Supply said. Those not qualified have been found to earn more than JD 500 per month (Al Ra'i).

Hotels fire 22 maintenance workers

THE COMPANY that owns both Regency Palace Hotel and Grand Palace Hotel has dismissed 22 workers employed in the maintenance section under the management pretext of modernising and initiating administrative as well as operational reforms. Alleging that the maintenance section and the workers were not suited for the daily needs to provide maintenance services to the two hotels, the board of directors decided to abolish the section and to hire a contractor to do the maintenance work under an annual contract (Al Dustour).

Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	Jan 24/96	Jan 25/96
Sterling Pound	1.5655	1.5631
Deutsche Mark	1.4490	1.4374
Swiss Franc	1.1791	1.1761
French Franc	6.9815	6.9895
Japanese Yen	105.00	104.65
European Currency Unit	1.1652	1.1680

Source: Reuters

Forward Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
U.S. Dollar	5.04	5.00	4.88	4.75
Sterling Pound	6.00	5.93	5.81	5.68
Deutsche Mark	3.06	3.00	2.90	2.80
Swiss Franc	1.25	1.37	1.43	1.63
French Franc	5.81	5.87	5.95	6.00
Japanese Yen	0.25	0.31	0.37	0.43
European Currency Unit	4.85	4.89	4.96	4.94

Source: Reuters

Forward Rates

Metal	USD/oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/oz	JD/Gm
Gold	397.95	7.90	Silver	5.50	0.100

Source: Reuters

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Jan 24, 1996

Currency	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0889	1.0964
Deutsche Mark	0.4886	0.4912
Swiss Franc	0.6011	0.6031
French Franc	0.1423	0.1450
Japanese Yen	0.6745	0.6770
Dutch Guilder	0.4365	0.4385
Spanish Peseta	0.0264	0.0268
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000

Source: Reuters

Other Currencies

Currency	Buy	Sell
Bahraini Dinar	1.3880	1.3930
Lebanese Lira	0.042380	0.042715
Saudi Riyal	0.1870	0.1895
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3070	2.3670
Qatari Riyal	0.1932	0.1945
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2100
Omani Riyal	1.6330	1.6410
UAE Dirham	0.1927	0.1933
Greek Drachma	0.2445	0.2415
Cypriot Pound	1.5115	1.5575

Source: Reuters

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR JANUARY 24, 1996

COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CHG.
ABU DHABI BANK	20	4700	235.00	235.00
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL BANK	1243	3147	25.29	25.29
JORDAN POSTAL BANK	1172	5867	5.00	5.00
JORDAN TRADING BANK	9773	8945	0.915	0.915
JORDAN COMMERCIAL BANK	428	1838	4.29	4.29
RENTIS BANK	5000	1573	3.146	3.146
WEST JORDAN BANK	200	776	3.880	3.880
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14000	191	0.013	0.013
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	7268	2852	1.265	1.265
BANK & SECUR	14571	17447	1.200	1.200
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	287	1000	3.480	3.480
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	582	2660	4.570	4.570
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JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	582	2660	4.570	4.

A look back at Jordanian basketball in '95

Marwan Ma'touq explains Ahli's declining form

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Now that the 1995 basketball season is over the Kingdom's teams have less than a month off before player registration and age-group competitions begin for the 1996 season. Just as the Jordan Basketball Federation had announced the beginning of the past year, 1995 proved to be the year of national teams marking the first time Jordan qualified to a World Championship after getting the bronze medal in the Asian Junior Championship. Jordan also became the first and only Arab country to take part in the Women's Asian Basketball Championship after regrouping the women's teams following a 12-year absence. Jordan also took part in the Men's Asian Championship and the Asian Clubs Championship.

All this was achieved with the efforts of the Jordan Basketball Federation and friends and sponsors of the game who stretched the JD 15,000 budget set by the Ministry of Youth to over JD 150,000 to enable national teams to take part in the aforementioned tournaments.

While national teams had their busiest year ever, the same cannot be said of the local championships, two of which (the Under-16 and Under-18) had to be cancelled for unspecified reasons.

However, the season will be remembered most for the interesting first division championship which was concluded last week when Al Orthodoxy ended Al Ahli's three year reign and reclaimed the title they had won for decades.

Al Jazireh scored the tournament's biggest upset but lost the chance to probably win the championship. They defeated titleholders Al Ahli 76-73 but lost 77-73 in the second round and also lost to Al Orthodoxy 72-66 and 83-75. Al Jazireh thus settled for third but ended up with two titles — U-22 and women's trophy. Al Orthodoxy had won the U-14 title. Al Yarmouk took the second division trophy and were promoted to the first division taking the place of the relegated team — Al Abbasi.

With most teams now having some time to consider their results and plan for the upcoming season, the team that has a lot of reflection to do will be Al Ahli who unexpectedly lost their title to all-time rivals Al Orthodoxy.

Al Ahli's dominance of the game in the past few years was quite an achievement as they ended Al Orthodoxy's 1976-1989 undisputed reign.

While Al Orthodoxy took back the title in 1991 when

Al Ahli missed the efforts of their star centre Naser Bushnaq Al Ahli came back to win the title three consecutive times with hardly any resistance from other teams.

Going into the championship this year Al Ahli's assistant coach Ghaith Najjar boasted that Al Ahli would win the title again and challenged any team to beat them for the next five years.

Al Orthodoxy on the other hand sounded a serious warning and despite losing the first round encounter 90-76 they took the title with a convincing 92-75 win over Al Ahli whose loss to Al Jazireh was the determining factor in losing the crown. Otherwise a title-deciding round would have been played.

As Al Ahli's players and officials contemplate their loss, team veteran and one of the country's top players Marwan Ma'touq explained that Al Ahli "had a lot of homework to do in order to get their house in order."

In an interview with the Jordan Times Ma'touq said Al Orthodoxy were to be truly congratulated for their excellent form which enabled them to reclaim the title. He also praised Al Jazireh's performance saying that strong competition meant Jordanian basketball was still in good shape and there was hope for better national teams in the future.

"While other teams were ready, we had not prepared well for the competition," said Ma'touq. "No one is to blame but that is the fact and reason why we were unable to keep the title that I and others worked so very hard to win in 1990."

Ma'touq emphasised the point that Al Ahli were missing the efforts of five key players: Naser Bushnaq, Samir Murqus, Sami Saduladin, Walid Badran and Zeid Alkhas. "Those five are a team of their own. Since they did not leave the team exactly before the competition I am surprised no one really prepared bench players to take their place. That is why everyone was surprised that Al Ahli were not depending on a big number of substitute players whose form fluctuated from one match to another."

In fact key players like Ramez Hammoudeh, Mohammad Shamali and Marwan Saedi did not have a consistent form either and the team greatly missed a powerful centre as they lacked rebounding throughout their final match. With Ma'touq and team captain Yousef Zaghoul closely guarded Al Orthodoxy's players successfully executed their coach's directives and managed to set the pace throughout the match led



The Kingdom's U-18 team holding the Asian third place trophy pose with basketball federation officials following their arrival in Amman (file photo)



Al Orthodoxy's Hilal Barakat receives the '95 championship trophy from the minister of youth Feb. 27 (photo by Abdullah Ayyoub)



The Kingdom's women's team celebrate their win over Indonesia in the Asian Basketball Championship (file photo)

by Hilal Barakat. Ma'touq who is well-known for his three-pointers was not assisted by teammates. He explained that the team had not practised well before the final match and that players seemed to have taken the win for granted and did not bother to attend practice. "We played just the way we practised in the final week. We were not ready but our

opponents were," he said adding that the team's physical fitness was unlike other years.

While declining to say if he would quit the team next season Ma'touq said that a lot of things needed to be changed in order to get the team in championship-winning form. "We haven't lost the potential, it's just that the players seemed to have no incentive and no

one expected that they play in such a demoralised way in the final.

"I guess it is now up to the team officials to reassess the team's needs. Of course a lot also depends on the players perseverance and attitude. I hope that circumstances will change for the better. It will require a lot of teamwork from everyone," he concluded.

Sampras to face Chang in Memphis semis

MEMPHIS (R) — Top seed and world number one Pete Sampras rallied past Australian Mark Woodforde 6-4, 7-6 (9-7) Friday to set up a semifinal match with third seed Michael Chang in the Kroger St Jude tennis tournament.

Chang beat sixth seed Malival Washington of the United States 7-5, 3-6, 6-4 in their quarter-final.

Mark Philippoussis of Australia, seeded 10th, blasted 15th seed Jiri Novak of the Czech Republic 6-3, 6-1 to earn a semifinal spot against fifth-seeded American Todd Martin, who beat fourth-seeded Swede Thomas Enqvist 6-4, 6-4.

Sampras fell behind 4-1 in the second set but he lost only two points in taking the next three games.

He trailed again in the tiebreaker at 6-4, facing match point, but Woodforde made two volleying errors en route to facing a match point himself. Sampras squandered that one on a double fault but closed out the match when woodforde sent a backhand long.

Sampras has won all four of his tiebreakers in this tournament. He said he played some of his best tennis of the week against Woodforde.

"That's the best I've served in two weeks," said Sampras, who had 16 aces. "Lefties like me are tough for me to



Malival Washington

play. He's a very crafty player with a really good all-court game."

Chang was trailing 3-1 in the third set before rallying to take the next five games.

"It was a struggle but unfortunately I couldn't pull it off in the third set," said Washington, who fell to 2-7 lifetime against Chang. "I didn't think I played poorly but he just played solid when he had to."

The 19-year-old Philippoussis had too much power for Novak. With his serve reaching 133 miles per hour (214 kph), he has not lost a

set in the tournament.

"I'm getting better and better," said Philippoussis, who beat Sampras in the Australian open this year.

After the match, Philippoussis headed to Graceland, home of the late Elvis Presley.

Martin stayed on course to defend his championship with his win over Enqvist. Martin has not lost a set in the tournament and is 19-2 lifetime in Memphis. After spotting Enqvist a 3-0 lead in the second set, Martin played nearly flawless tennis while forcing the Swede into errors.

Novotna ends Capriati's comeback

ESSEN (R) — Jana Novotna beat Jennifer Capriati 7-6, 2-6, 6-3 in the quarter-finals of the WTA tournament on Friday, dashing the American's hopes of marking her comeback with a little.

In the best match of the \$450,000 tournament so far, Novotna and Capriati took a power-packed first set to a tie-break.

The Czech former Wimbledon finalist eventually took the set on her fourth set point, winning the tie-break 8-6.

But the 19-year-old American, who has come through the trauma of a highly-publicised shoplifting incident and drug rehabilitation after she was caught in possession of cannabis, stormed back to take the second set in style.

The final set was even before fourth seed Novotna got the decisive break at 4-3 and went on to take the



Jana Novotna

match in 2 1/4 hours.

Novotna's reward is a semifinal against second seed Anke Huber, who defeated fellow German Barbara Rittner 6-4, 7-4.

Top seed Martina Hingis

Croatia beat Els Callens of Belgium 7-5, 6-4 and meets unseeded Swede Asa Carlsson in the other semifinal. Carlsson beat Australian Rennae Stubbs 7-6, 6-2 in her quarter-final.

Australia's top squash player banned from national team

BRISBANE, (AFP) — Squash firebrand Anthony Hill has been banned from representing Australia until 2001 following his ill-tempered display at last November's world team championship in Cairo. Squash Australia announced here Saturday.

"This, as far as we can ascertain, is the first time it has been necessary for us to ban a member from one of our national teams," said Squash Australia executive director Phil Trenorden.

Hill, 26, had already been banned for two years by the World Squash Federation (WSF) and for three months by the Professional Squash Association (PSA).

The PSA also fined him 1,400 British pounds (\$2,100) over the incident in Cairo during a semifinal rubber against Pakistan's Mir Zaman Gul.

The WSF had charged Hill with "physically and verbally abusing his opponent, verbally abusing the referee, showing dissent, throwing his racket and generally bringing the game into disrepute."

Gul, awarded a series of penalty strokes when Hill barged into him, won the match to clinch a 2-1 victory for Pakistan over the top-seeded Australians.

Gul and Hill had previously clashed in the first round of the 1994 British Open when Hill was awarded the match after being head-butted by the Pakistani.

Squash Australia said Hill would not be considered for national selection until January 1, 2001, ruling him out of

the 1997 and 1999 world team events, the new World Cup being launched in May and the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Malaysia, which include squash for the first time.

Hill, who has indicated he would appeal against the sanction, has 28 days to lodge notification with Squash Australia.

Former Australian great Geoff Hunt urged Saturday that Hill seek help.

Hunt, the Australian coach and Hill's former coach at the Australian Institute of Sport, believes Hill's punishment appeared harsh but readily acknowledged there was a problem.

"It was a severe suspension, but I think there's no doubt that some sort of suspension was warranted by his behaviour," Hunt said.

"My recommendation was that he not be allowed to play for Australia until he proved to us that his behaviour on court had improved."

"His behaviour at the world championships was such that it was very costly to him in that particular match and to the Australian team."

"The real problem is that he can't seem to console himself on court. He's got to address that and my suggestion would be some sort of sports psychologist. But it's alright being told to do that, you've got to want to do it. He's got to be prepared to make the change."

Kluivert to face homicide trial

AMSTERDAM (R) — Teenage Dutch striker Patrick Kluivert will stand trial on May 1, charged with causing death by dangerous driving in a car accident last September, the Dutch news agency ANP reported on Friday.

The Ajax Amsterdam player has admitted speeding at the time the BMW sports car he was driving was in collision with another vehicle on September 9.

The driver of the other vehicle was killed and a passenger injured. Kluivert, 19, was unhurt.



Former tennis star Mats Wilander of Sweden speaks at a press conference at his lawyer's office in New York where there was a limited discussion of International Tennis Federation

charges that he tested positive for cocaine use at the French Open in June, 1995. Wilander said he has never used illegal drugs. Lawyer Robert Kalina is at right (Reuters photo)

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 699238	CINEMA TEL: 677420	AMMOUN THEATRE & CINEMA/ TEL: 618274 - 618275	Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA	PLAZA	CONCORD		
	Jean Claude Van Dam in SUDDEN DEATH Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.	Adel Emam/Dalal Abdel Azeez/ Shereen Saaf AlNaser Sleeping on Honey (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD "1" Adel Emam/Dalal Abdel Azeez/ Shereen Saaf AlNaser Sleeping on Honey (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD "2" Van Dam/Roger Moore THE QUEST Shows: 12, 1:45, 3:30, 5:15, 6:45	Ahmad Zaki / Ragdah in ESTAKOZA (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	"Ahlan Tatbie" play Welcome Normalisation Shows: 8:30 p.m. For reservation call 625155

Bulls lose to Miami Heat

MIAMI (R) — This would have been a real longshot, but Rex Chapman doesn't gamble.

Chapman scored 39 points — 27 on 9-of-10 three-point shooting — to lead the undermanned Miami Heat past the NBA-best Chicago Bulls 113-104 Friday.

The Heat dressed just eight players after a slew of trades the day before, but Chapman was enough, tying a career-high by connecting on 12-of-17 shots.

"This happens all the time in sports. I don't know how people can bet on sports," Chapman said. "I wish it was this good all the time. This is a whole new time for us."

"It is wonderful. With what happened yesterday and the emotions yesterday, everybody was just assuming this was a big loss," said Heat coach Pat Riley. "It is hard to fight that feeling but our guys were not intimidated at all."

Chapman scored 23 in the first half, 18 on three-pointers, as Miami nearly matched its output from its previous game by going up 62-44. The Heat managed just 66 points in a win over Philadelphia Wednesday.

"I said in the huddle when the game began that Chicago was going to underestimate us," said centre Alonzo Mourning, who had 19 points and 12 rebounds.

Michael Jordan finished with 31 points for the Bulls, who had their seven-game winning streak snapped.

"We hit a hot team and we deserved it tonight," said Bulls coach Phil Jackson, whose team led just once, at 2-0.

The Bulls rallied from 26 points down to 106-101 with 1:12 to play but could get no closer. It was the first time Chicago (48-6) lost this season when scoring over 100 points (38-1).

In Milwaukee, Penny Hardaway scored 19 points and Shaquille O'Neal 17 as the Orlando Magic maintained their mastery of the Bucks with a 115-102 victory.

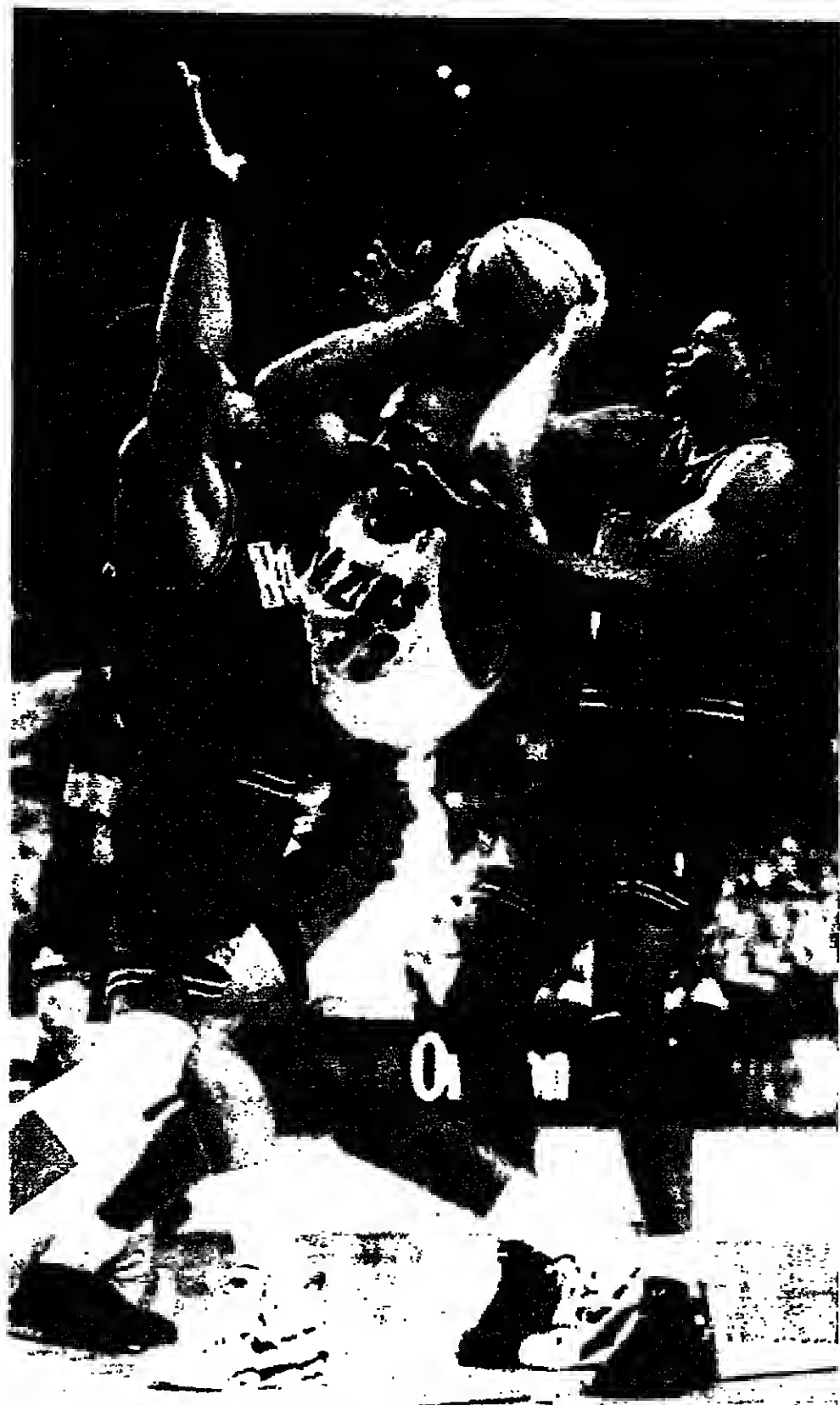
The Magic won their ninth straight against Milwaukee and sixth in a row overall. They improved to 12-14 on the road but just 3-7 against Central Division teams as they tuned up for their showdown with the Bulls on Sunday.

Milwaukee has lost four of its last five games.

In New York, Stacey Augmon had season highs of 24 points and 11 rebounds and Mookie Blaylock added 22 points, nine assists and five steals as the Atlanta Hawks snapped a two-game losing streak, 108-97 over the Knicks.

Atlanta, which won for just the fifth time in 12 games following a 10-game winning streak, was without guard Steve Smith (sprained ankle).

Trade acquisition Christian Laettner made his debut for the Hawks, scoring 12 points with seven rebounds in 23 minutes.



Tom Hammonds (left) and Reggie Williams (right) of the Denver Nuggets surround Gary Trent (33) of the Portland Trailblazers during first half of their NBA game in Portland. Portland beat Denver 107-78 (Reuters photo)

minutes.

Anthony Mason, 10-of-13 from the floor, had 24 points and 14 rebounds and John Starks scored 26 points for New York, whose centre Patrick Ewing was out (sprained ankle).

In Dallas, Cedric Ceballos scored 27 points and Vlade Divac had 20 points and 18 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers won their eighth straight, 114-88 over the Mavericks.

Elden Campbell had 20 points, 11 rebounds, five blocks and three steals for Los Angeles, which won for the 16th time in 18 games despite playing without Magic Johnson, who missed his third straight game with a strained right calf.

Jason Kidd got his league-leading sixth triple-double for Dallas, which lost at home to the Lakers for the 14th time in 17 games. Kidd had 17 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds for the Mavericks, who have lost five of six.

At Indiana, Rik Smits scored 18 points to lead a balanced attack as the Pacers snapped a three-game home losing streak, 102-95 over the Philadelphia 76ers.

The Pacers won for just the second time in seven games.

League-worst Philadelphia (10-42) lost its sixth straight forward Derrick Coleman re-injured his ankle early in the fourth quarter and left the game with six rebounds and six points on 2-of-9 shooting in 25 minutes.

At Minnesota, Isaiah Rider's free throw with four-tenths of a second to play snapped a tie as the Timberwolves blew an 11-point lead in the final 5:42 of the game but edged the Detroit Pistons 94-93. Rider finished with 26 points.

Detroit lost its last two games by a combined four points.

In Phoenix, Elliot Perry had 20 points and 14 assists and Wesley Person scored 25

points as the Suns held off the Toronto Raptors for their third consecutive victory, 110-105.

Phoenix won for the seventh time in nine games despite dressing only eight players. Kevin Johnson re-injured his groin prior to the game.

At Washington, Kenny Anderson scored 22 points and Dell Curry had eight of his 21 in the fourth quarter as the Charlotte Hornets beat the Bulls 100-94 for their season-high fifth straight win.

In Sacramento, David Robinson scored 34 points and Sean Elliott added 21 as the San Antonio Spurs dealt the fading Kings their ninth consecutive defeat, 112-105.

RESULTS

Indiana	102	Philadelphia	95
Miami	113	Chicago	104
Atlanta	108	New York	97
Charlotte	100	Washington	94
LA Lakers	114	Dallas	88
Minnesota	94	Detroit	93
Orlando	115	Milwaukee	102
Phoenix	110	Toronto	105
San Antonio	112	Sacramento	105

Stockton adds NBA steals record

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — John Stockton, having added the National Basketball Association's steals record to his career mark for assists, now hopes to slip out of the spotlight he hates so much.

"I don't think about statistics..." Utah's eight-time All-Star said after breaking Maurice Cheeks' record during a 112-98 victory over Boston.

Stockton's big play came after Boston's Rick Fox passed to Eric Williams in the post. The rookie forward then drove the baseline, where Stockton was waiting to make steal No. 2,311 with 8:21 remaining.

"I didn't think going down, 'this is it,'" he said. "I just took a swipe at it and got the ball loose. Then I just tried to recover it and ju from there."

Williams, destined to be remembered as Stockton's history-making victim, said: "I dribbled it and he took it... he has such quick hands. They came out of nowhere."

Stockton capped the milestone in typical fashion for the NBA's all-time assists champion, passing to Chris Morris for a 3-pointer — one of 14 assists.

Just over a year ago, on Feb. 1 against Denver, Stockton broke Magic Johnson's assist record. For the ninth consecutive season, the 6-foot-1 (1.8-meter) point guard again is leading the league in that category with an 11.3 average.

But Utah coach Jerry Sloan insists steals and assists tell only a small story of Stockton's 11½ NBA seasons.

"He loves to play basketball," Sloan said. "It's too bad they don't keep stats on the number of screens a guy sets, because I think that would be high, too."

"John plays as hard as he can in all instances of the game..."

Stockton, who will play for the U.S. Olympic team this summer after being part of the Dream Team in Barcelona in 1992, entered Tuesday's game with 2,309 steals, one short of the record checks compiled over 15 seasons.

Stockton tied the mark with 5:08 left in the second quarter when he slapped a pass away from Eric Montross to teammate Antoine Carr.

Lost in the hoopla was another record set by Stockton: career 3-pointers on Utah. He made his 531st on a shot from beyond the top of the key with 26 seconds left in the first half, topping Darrell Griffith's total of 530.

American swimmer gets 2-year probation

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado (R) — American distance swimmer Jennifer Foschi's sanction for testing positive for steroids was lightened Friday from a two-year suspension to her original two-year probation.

In announcing their decision to reverse Foschi's sentence a second time, United States swimming officials cited the "strong warning" — as opposed to a suspension — given by the International Swimming Federation (FINA) to Australian world champion Samantha Riley for failing a drug test.

U.S. swimming said its board of directors incorporated in its decision an earlier finding that "Jessica Foschi had no knowledge of the manner in which the banned substance entered her body."

Foschi tested positive for the anabolic steroid mesterolone at the 1995 Phillips 66 Summer Nationals last August and initially was given a two-year probation which was later stiffened into a two-year ban.

The 15-year-old swimmer and her family have said she never knowingly took any banned substances. The suspension would have kept her out of the Atlanta Olympics this summer.

In its latest decision, U.S. swimming placed Foschi on probation for two years starting Aug. 4, 1995, and struck her time in the 1,500 metre freestyle on that date from the record.

The board of directors' majority decision,

reached in a two-hour conference call, said that if Foschi ever tested positive for any banned substance again she would receive a life ban. She will be subject to mandatory out-of-competition drug testing.

"In light of FINA's actions in the Samantha Riley case, I felt our board deserved an opportunity to reconsider their Orlando finding in the Jessica Foschi matter," U.S. Swimming President Carol Zaleski said in the organization's statement.

"I respect the board's decision in a difficult situation. Today's board action will be forwarded to FINA."

Riley tested positive for propoxyphene metabolite, a narcotic analgesic, at the world short-course championships in Rio de Janeiro on Dec. 1, but FINA said last Tuesday the substance had no potential to enhance her performance and let her off with only the "strong warning."

Riley's coach Scott Volkner said he inadvertently gave the swimmer a pill containing the banned drug after she complained of a headache. He was suspended for two years.

Riley set world short course records in winning the 100- and 200-metre breaststroke titles in Brazil.

The 23-year-old Riley said last week that the usual mandatory two-year ban for a positive drug test would effectively end her career.

Rubin, Coetzer advance in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY (R) — Russian Elena Likhovtseva, the seventh seed, knocked fourth seed Amy Frazier out of the \$164,250 IGA tennis classic for the second year in a row with a 7-6 (7-3), 3-6, 6-1 quarter-final victory Friday.

In the semifinals, the 20-year-old Likhovtseva was to face second-seeded Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands in a rematch of last year's finals. Schultz-McCarthy knocked off Lisa Raymond 6-3, 6-3.

In other quarter-final matches, top seed Chanda Rubin beat fellow American Katrina Adams 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 and third seed Amanda Coetzer stopped fellow South African Joannette Kruger 6-1, 6-4.

Likhovtseva was seeded ninth in this tournament a year ago when she eliminated Frazier. The American was seeded second when she lost in the semifinals 7-5, 2-6, 7-5.

This time it was nearly as close. Likhovtseva finally taking command in the third set.

"She's the kind of player I can play because she hits the ball straight and doesn't move too much," the Russian said.

"I don't have much of a problem with that (style). I didn't feel comfortable until the third set. I didn't get into

a rhythm until then."

The second-place finish in the 1995 Oklahoma City tournament was Likhovtseva's best since joining the tour in 1992.

"There are more top play-

ers here this year compared

to last year," she said.

Likhovtseva at 45th is the lowest ranked player left in the field. Rubin is 10th, Schultz-McCarthy 11th and Coetzer 17th.

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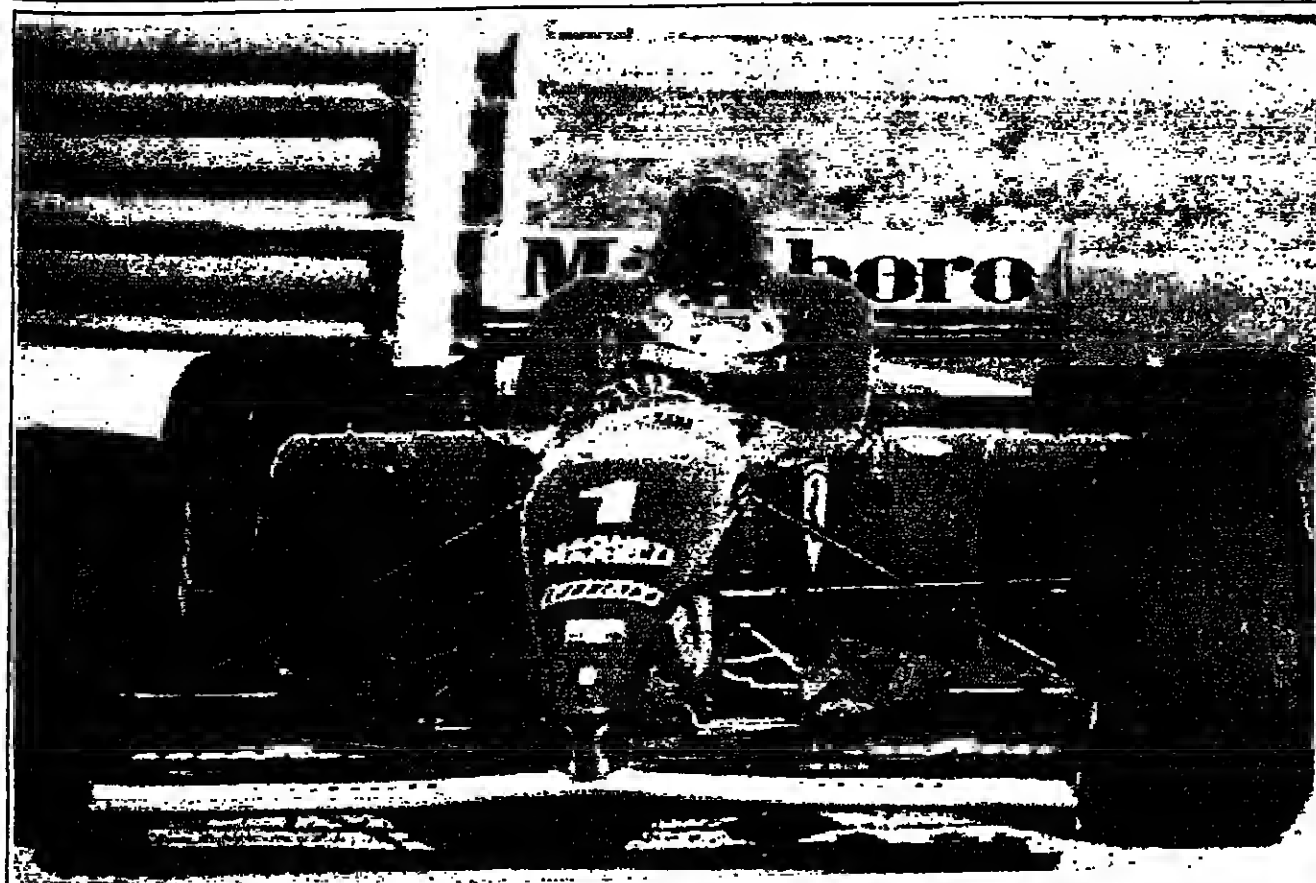
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* All requests will be handled with confidentiality.



German driver Michael Schumacher makes a test lap with his new Ferrari Formula One car. Ferrari started Feb. 23

preparing the new car at the Estoril circuit for the Formula One 1996 World Championship (Reuters photo)

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AKJ854 ♠ Q876 ♣ Void 4A 1022

The bidding has proceeded:
WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
1♣ 1♦ 2♣ 2♦
What action do you take?

Q. 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AA7 ♠ AQJ73 ♣ J6 410763

The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ 1♦ 2♣ 2♦
2♣ 2♦ 2♣ 2♦
What do you bid now?

Q. 3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AQ84 ♠ AK573 ♣ 876 AK5

The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♣ 1♦ 2♣ 2♦
2♣ 2♦ 2♣ 2♦
What do you bid now?

Q. 4 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AK1076 ♠ K952 ♣ Q1096 43

The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♣ 1♦ 2♣ 2♦
What action do you take?

Q. 5 - East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:

AAK66 ♠ KQJ53 ♣ AQ1088

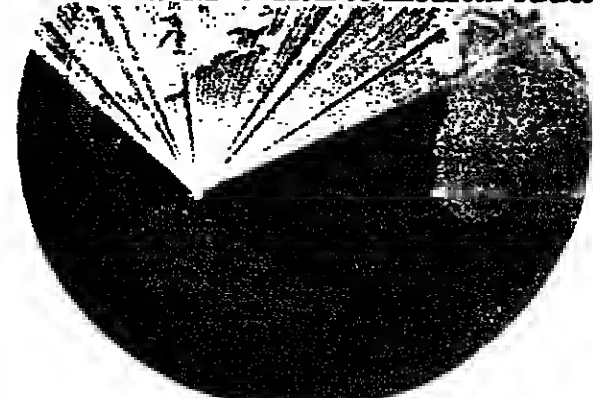
The bidding has proceeded:
EAST SOUTH WEST NORTH
1♣ 1♦ 2♣ 2♦
2♣ 2♦ 2♣ 2♦
What action do you take?

Q. 6 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AAKJ ♠ Q10543 ♣ 884 AQ6

The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♣ 1♦ 2♣ 2♦
2♣ 2♦ 2♣ 2♦
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Gen. Kamel's killing provokes international condemnation

NICOSIA (Agencies) — The killing of two senior Iraqi defectors who had been promised a pardon provoked international condemnation of Baghdad on Saturday and raised new warnings about the ruthlessness of President Saddam Hussein.

Jordan, which had sheltered the defectors for six months before they decided to return to Baghdad on Tuesday, described the murders as a "premeditated criminal act." (See page 1 story).

The Iraqi government announced that General Hussein Kamel and his brother Colonel Saddam Kamel, both sons-in-law of Saddam Hussein, were shot dead Friday by relatives who wanted to restore the family honour.

But few officials outside Iraq said they believed that account and charged it was an execution by President Saddam's government in retribution for the men's betrayal. "The brutality of this, and the whole way that they were welcomed and pardoned and murdered shows as great deal

about the way Saddam Hussein believes that he deals with people," the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, said in New York.

The White House reacted without surprise to the killings. "Given the behaviour of Saddam in the past, he (Gen. Kamel) must have fully known the type of risks he would be taking," said White House spokesman David Johnson.

Iraqi opposition members said Saturday that President Saddam had ordered the execution after promising the pardon.

"Hussein Kamel was liquidated after having been interrogated continuously since his arrival in Baghdad on Tuesday," said General Wafiq Samarra, a former Iraqi intelligence chief who defected to Syria in 1994.

The two brothers and their wives Raghad and Rana, both daughters of President Saddam, fled to Jordan on Aug. 8. Four days later Gen.

Kamel called for President Saddam's overthrow and then provided information to the United Nations about Iraq's secret programmes to build non-conventional weapons.

A Saudi prince who led Arab forces in a multinational coalition during the 1991 Gulf War that drove Iraq from Kuwait has urged the United States to resort to military action to oust President Saddam since U.N. sanctions have only hurt the Iraqi people.

"The siege against Iraq had a good start as it was intended to weaken the regime and save the people. But what happened after five years was the opposite," Prince Khalid bin Sultan told the London-based Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) television in an interview late Friday.

His Majesty King Hussein predicted in an interview published in Kuwait on Saturday that the Iraqi president was on his way out.

"The Iraqi people have

reached a stage where a change imposes itself, and I believe this change will take place soon," King Hussein was quoted as telling the Al Qabas newspaper. "The situation cannot continue this way." (See page 1)

Iran said the killing of the defectors would foil attempts by Baghdad to improve its world image.

"The Baghdad government has tried in past months to portray an acceptable image of itself by holding elections and pretending to support human rights (but) the murder of the defector generals after their return is likely to foil these attempts," Iran's state-run radio said in a commentary.

"Even though the Baghdad government has not given any indications of its support for the (killings), considering the state structure of Iraq and the government's reliance on violence, observers believe that Baghdad... is in no way absolved from accusations."

(Continued on page 3)

Coalition bid between Turkey's conservatives, Islamists fails

ANKARA (AFP) — Coalition talks between Turkey's conservative Motherland Party and the pro-Islamic Welfare Party failed Saturday as the two groups proved unable to resolve serious differences, mainly on the economy.

"Unfortunately, we couldn't reach a reconciliation with the Welfare. The way we consider Turkey's position in the world is very different from theirs," Motherland leader Yilmaz told a news conference after a meeting with Welfare leader Necmettin Erbakan.

"We understood that we would not be able to form a

harmonious government with Welfare. For this reason we quit," he added.

Minutes later, the two parties indicated that they were seeking alternative alliances with caretaker Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's center-right True Path Party.

At a separate news conference, Mr. Erbakan accused Motherland of torpedoing the coalition talks "by demanding too much," and dropped hints about alternative cooperation with True Path.

Motherland officials said that at this point, they would once more try to resume contacts with True Path for a

possible coalition. Previous talks between the two parties had collapsed in January.

Mr. Yilmaz said he was planning to return his mandate, as prime minister-designate, to President Suleyman Demirel Sunday.

He said one main point of dispute with Welfare involved the sharing of key economic posts in the new government, including the finance ministry and the undersecretariates of the treasury, foreign trade and privatisation.

"It was not fair to try to exclude Welfare from the economy," Mr. Erbakan said. "We have made every

effort and sacrifice for a coalition, but they (Motherland) demanded too much, and at this point we don't feel responsible at all for the failure of the talks."

The two men had said after a meeting on Monday that they had secured an accord in principle to form a new government, and they ordered their aides to launch talks for the sharing of posts.

"However, after three meetings between our party officials since Wednesday, no reconciliation has been reached — and today, Mr. Erbakan and I couldn't resolve the differences," Mr. Yilmaz said.

One dead, 4 wounded in Algiers car bomb

PARIS (R) — A booby-trapped car exploded in the Algerian capital Algiers on Saturday, killing at least one person and injuring four, security sources said.

The bomb went off in the southern suburb of Eucalypt at about 8.30 a.m. (0730 GMT) and also damaged some buildings and several parked cars, state-run media said, quoting an official security source statement.

More than 20 people were killed in two car bombings on Feb. 11 in Algiers following a pattern of attacks carried out over the past four years.

Algerian authorities blame Muslim fundamentalists for the bombings which appear to have become a favoured tool in the bloody conflict between Muslim guerrillas and the Algerian government.

Algeria's President Liamine Zeroual, who was elected last November by conflict-weary voters to help

restore peace, repeated this week his pledge to crush the Muslim guerrillas.

An estimated 50,000 people have been killed in Algeria since early 1992 when authorities cancelled a general elections which the Islamists were set to win.

In another development Saturday, Mr. Zeroual made his first trip outside the capital Algiers since his election, visiting the country's main gas field.

The official news agency APs said Mr. Zeroual flew to the Hassi Rmel area for commemorations marking the nationalisation of Algeria's oil and gas resources 25 years ago.

Mr. Zeroual was accompanied by senior officials, including top adviser Mohammed Betchine, Interior Minister Mustapha Benmansour and Energy and Industry Minister Amar Makhloufi, said APS.

Israel worries about Jordan after murder of defector

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel warned Jordan on Saturday to be prudent after two senior Iraqi defectors granted refuge in Amman for six months were killed on their return to Baghdad.

"For the moment, Jordan has not reacted, but there is no doubt that it must show the greatest prudence," a commentator on Israeli state radio said.

"King Hussein chose to walk a tightrope in welcoming General Hussein Kamel Hassan and his brother while calling for the fall of the Iraqi regime," the radio added.

But the Jordanian monarch has so far resisted allowing his country to become a base for anti-Iraqi operations and has not personally attacked President Saddam Hussein, the radio said.

As for the assassination of Gen. Kamel and his brother on Friday after they decided to return to Iraq, the radio said: "Saddam Hussein never forgets and never pardons."

programme," the radio added.

The defection to Jordan six months ago of Gen. Kamel, his brother and their wives, both daughters of President Saddam, was a "personal affront for Saddam Hussein because they were part of the family's inner circle."

Israeli military radio added that the defectors had "fallen into a deadly trap" and that their murder was a "warning to any army officials tempted to oppose President Saddam Hussein."

General Kamel and his brother Colonel Saddam Hassan, as well as another brother and their father, were killed at their home in Baghdad on Friday, three days after returning to Iraq from Jordan with the blessing of President Saddam.

The Iraqi authorities said they were shot dead by relatives who wanted to restore the family honour.

During the 1991 Gulf war, Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles toward the Tel Aviv area, injuring hundreds of people and damaging numerous buildings.

NATO, Bosnian Serbs 'restore contacts,' exodus continues

SARAJEVO (AFP) — A top commander of NATO-led peacekeepers in Bosnia said Saturday the Bosnian Serbs had restored contact with NATO forces as efforts to alleviate a Serb exodus from Bosnia's capital continued.

Earlier, the commander of NATO's peacekeepers in Bosnia, U.S. Navy Admiral Leighton Smith, was confronted by an angry crowd of Serbs in a suburb of Sarajevo calling for help to leave the suburb where police from the mainly Muslim government began their first patrols in four years Friday.

British General Michael Walker, the commander of ground troops for the NATO-led peace Implementation Force (IFOR), said after meeting deputy Serb military commander General Zdravko Tolimir that "the (Bosnian Serb army)

VRS has restored contacts with IFOR."

"We have just had a very successful meeting," Gen. Walker said. "We spent time talking about the situation in Sarajevo (and) the general tenor of the relationship" between IFOR and the Serbs.

"General Tolimir has given me his assurance that those links are now formally re-established," he said.

The two men had discussed what could be done to assist the up to 50,000 Serbs leaving five formerly Serb-held suburbs of Sarajevo ahead of their handover to the Bosnian government on March 19, he said.

IFOR's announcement of the renewal of contacts with the Serbs, broken off two weeks ago, was seen as likely to pressage an early suspension of the economic and travel sanctions imposed

against the Serbs in 1994 by the United Nations.

The United Nations is expected this weekend to vote to suspend the sanctions, dependent on advice from IFOR commander Smith who had Thursday asked for a 48-hour delay to put pressure on the Serbs.

That request for a delay has already been broken by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who Friday unilaterally lifted the sanctions.

For IFOR, however, the biggest headache now is the exodus of Serbs from Sarajevo, which is putting thousands of Serbs on the road in the heart of winter.

IFOR has appealed many times to the Serbs to stay in the city and provided increased vehicle and foot patrols for their protection, its chief of operations Andrew Cummings said Saturday.

But the Serbs were "not getting a tremendously accurate, positive or firm direction (from their leaders) as to what they should do" and unruly Serb gangs operating in the Serb suburbs "are placing people under considerable threats" if they choose to stay, he said.

Elsewhere, Croatia's Defence Minister Gojko Susak said in Zagreb that the "uncontrolled" arming of Bosnia's Muslims now was "the greatest threat" to peace in Bosnia and called for joint Muslim-Croat control over weapons due to be delivered to the Bosnian federation later this year.

In Germany, the European Union's administrator in the southern Bosnian city of Mostar, Hans Koschnick, said in an interview to be published in a German newspaper Sunday that wants to

quit at the end of July — if not before — after two years of struggling with Muslim-Croat rivalry in the city.

European police said Saturday two people from the city's Muslim sector were attacked after entering the Croat sector despite an accord supposedly restoring freedom of movement.

Bosnian medical authorities said meanwhile the condition of Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, 70, who was hospitalised Thursday with heart trouble, has "improved."

At the same time, authorities announced that an amnesty for all Muslim, Serb and Croat soldiers who took part in the Bosnian conflict, except those considered guilty of specific war crimes, came into effect across Bosnia after its publication in an official journal.

Israel worries about Jordan after murder of defector

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel warned Jordan on Saturday to be prudent after two senior Iraqi defectors granted refuge in Amman for six months were killed on their return to Baghdad.

"For the moment, Jordan has not reacted, but there is no doubt that it must show the greatest prudence," a commentator on Israeli state radio said.

"King Hussein chose to walk a tightrope in welcoming General Hussein Kamel Hassan and his brother while calling for the fall of the Iraqi regime," the radio added.

But the Jordanian monarch has so far resisted allowing his country to become a base for anti-Iraqi operations and has not personally attacked President Saddam Hussein, the radio said.

As for the assassination of Gen. Kamel and his brother on Friday after they decided to return to Iraq, the radio said: "Saddam Hussein never forgets and never pardons."

programme," the radio added.

The defection to Jordan six months ago of Gen. Kamel, his brother and their wives, both daughters of President Saddam, was a "personal affront for Saddam Hussein because they were part of the family's inner circle."

Israeli military radio added that the defectors had "fallen into a deadly trap" and that their murder was a "warning to any army officials tempted to oppose President Saddam Hussein."

General Kamel and his brother Colonel Saddam Hassan, as well as another brother and their father, were killed at their home in Baghdad on Friday, three days after returning to Iraq from Jordan with the blessing of President Saddam.

The Iraqi authorities said they were shot dead by relatives who wanted to restore the family honour.

During the 1991 Gulf war, Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles toward the Tel Aviv area, injuring hundreds of people and damaging numerous buildings.

'More American Jews support peace process'

NEW YORK (AP) — American Jewish support for the Israeli-Arab peace process has increased significantly in the aftermath of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, according to a survey released recently.

The annual survey, the fourth performed by the American Jewish Committee since 1993, found that as of January, 79 per cent of American Jews approved of the Israeli government's handling of the peace negotiations with the Arabs.

The result represents a reversal of a two-year trend of decreasing support, from 84 per cent in September 1993,

when the peace accord was signed, to 68 per cent in September 1995.

Even among American orthodox Jews, the most critical of the peace process, the new survey indicated a rise in support. In January, 56 per cent of the orthodox opposed peace negotiations with the Arabs, while the most recent figure was 64 per cent.

Survey director David Singer said the jump in support for the peace process shows a reaction of sympathy in the aftermath of the assassination.

Among the findings:

— Despite the assassination, 90 per cent of American

Jews still believe criticism of the Israeli-Arab peace process is legitimate and agreed with the statement: "The Rabin assassination should not be used to stifle debate about the peace process."

— Eighty-five per cent of American Jews have a favourable impression of Prime Minister Shimon Peres, compared to 37 per cent who have a favourable impression of Benjamin Netanyahu, the opposition leader. However, 93 per cent of American Jews either didn't know or were unsure about whether the two men belonged to the same political party, which they do not.

Turkey returns envoy to Greece for talks

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's ambassador to Greece, recalled last Thursday, will return to Ankara on Monday for talks on their troubled relations, a Turkish official said on Saturday.

Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Onur Oymen told the Anatolian news agency that Ambassador Umit Pamir would take part in a series of meetings to assess Turkey-Greece ties.

"No step by Greece will rest uncounted," he told Anatolian. "Whatever step they take, they will find a

reply in the same vein. We hope Athens will take steps of friendship."

Turkey recalled its ambassador from Athens after Greece threatened to block a five-year European Union (EU) aid package designed to help Turkey adjust to its customs pact with the EU.

The latest crisis erupted some weeks after Greece and Turkey came close to military hostilities over sovereignty of disputed islets in the eastern Aegean.

Prime Minister Tansu Ciller will visit Rome, holder of

the rotating EU presidency, next week. Her trip is an apparent counter-attack after Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis toured Europe to lobby support over the Aegean dispute with Turkey.

Mr. Simitis said the dispute should be sent to the international court at the Hague.

Ms. Ciller invited Greece to hold dialogue on issues of contention. Turkey has accused Greece of consistently rejecting its calls for negotiations.



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Saturday confers with Palestinian Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Nabeel Shaath (Petra photo)

Premier meets Palestinian officials, Knesset members Kabarti: Jordan seeks to activate Jordanian-Palestinian committees

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti has reaffirmed Jordan's absolute support for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in its endeavours to reconstruct the Palestinian national economy and expressed the Kingdom's desire to reactivate joint Jordanian-Palestinian committees to promote bilateral ties.

The prime minister was speaking in his office at a meeting with Palestinian Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Nabeel Shaath in the presence of Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf.

Mr. Kabariti reviewed with Dr. Shaath Jordanian-Palestinian efforts to develop bilateral relations in economic and political fields and the removal of obstacles impeding trade and transport between the two sides.

After the meeting, Dr. Shaath told reporters that he conveyed to Mr. Kabariti President Yasser Arafat's congratulations on forming the government and discussed the tripartite meeting

which will be held shortly between His Majesty King Hussein and the Palestinian and Egyptian presidents.

Dr. Shaath said the two sides discussed "proper mechanism" for ensuring continued Jordanian-Palestinian coordination" adding that the joint committees were expected to meet following the tripartite summit.

Also Saturday Mr. Kabariti received Faisal Hussein who is in charge of the Jerusalem portfolio in the Palestinian Authority and discussed with him issues of common concern pertaining to the situation in the Holy City.

At the meeting the prime minister reiterated Jordan's firm stand with regard to Jerusalem, stressing that Jordan was adhering to the U.N. Security Council resolutions concerning Jerusalem.

In a statement following the meeting, Mr. Hussein said he discussed with the premier developments in Jerusalem, the siege imposed by Israel on the Arab city

which aims at destroying the Arab sector's infrastructure and the economic situation there.

Mr. Kabariti met also with Israeli Knesset members Abdul Wahab Darawseh and Talab Sane, who arrived in Amman Saturday on their way to Yemen. Mr. Kabariti and the two reviewed the latest developments in the Middle East peace process.

Following the meeting which was attended by Minister of Information Marwan Muasher, Mr. Darawseh expressed his belief that Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres will win the upcoming general elections in Israel and that the Arab parties will support the coming labour-led government.

Mr. Darawseh said he will convey to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh Mr. Peres' views with regard to the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over the Hanish island in the Red Sea, noting that Israel was neutral in the dispute and will not interfere in this affair.

U.S. group, Philippine senator, win awards

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Pathfinder International, an American organisation whose funds have been cut by Congress, and Leticia Ramos-Shahani, a member of the Philippine Senate, were named as winners of the prestigious U.N. Population Award. The winners were chosen Friday by a group of U.N. ambassadors, headed by Guatemala's representative, Julio Armando Martini. Sen. Ramos-Shahani is the Philippines leading exponent on population issues and its implications for social development and public health for the past 30 years.

She is the sister of President Fidel Ramos, was head of her country's delegation at the Beijing U.N. Women's Conference and was secretary-general of the 1985 International Women's Conference in Nairobi. Pathfinder International, founded in 1957, provides funds, contraceptive supplies and technical assistance for family planning services to groups all over the world. Since its inception it has supported more than 2,000 programmes in 30 countries.

But in recent weeks, Pathfinder as well as other family planning groups, has suffered a severe cut in aid. The conservative Republican Congress in recent legislation cut 35 per cent from the family planning budgets for the Agency of International Development, the largest supporter of such programmes in the world.

Kidnapper took baby to 'secure future'

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — A woman on trial for kidnapping a day-old baby acted in hopes of securing her future with the son of a wealthy Scottish family after she had a miscarriage, a court here heard Friday. The court refused bail for the alleged kidnapper, Sonja Crocker, 25, on grounds of the "selfishness... (and) seriousness of the offence", which was the abduction nearly two years ago of Micaela Hunter, less than 24 hours after she was born. Edward Hutchins, the officer investigating the case that has shocked South Africa, testified that Ms. Crocker had wanted to give an heir to her then boyfriend, identified only as Mr. McDonald, the last in line of a Scottish family. But although she miscarried when she was nine weeks pregnant, Mr. Hutchins claimed, Ms. Crocker pretended she was still pregnant and kidnapped Micaela, the newly born daughter of Bruce and Alison Hunter, from a Johannesburg maternity clinic on May 4, 1994.

Micaela was found after Ms. Crocker's current boyfriend, Charles Snyman, realised who his girlfriend's child really was and informed the police last week.

Oiled birds wash up on Alaskan shores

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (R) — More than 800 oily seabirds have washed up on the shores of a remote chain of Alaskan islands in the Bering Sea, and U.S. Coast Guard officials said Friday they were baffled.

"It's a mystery," said Coast Guard spokesman Jeff Crump. Mr. Crump said reports of the oily king eiders washing up on the Pribilof Islands, 1,100 kilometres west of Anchorage, were first made Tuesday by the harbourmaster in St. Paul on the northernmost island. "When the number increased to 800, we knew that we were dealing with something larger than anticipated," he said.

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